The Unexpected Christ

BY
LOUIS
ALBERT
BANKS

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THE UNEXPECTED CHRIST

A SERIES OF EVANGELISTIC SERMONS

BY

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TO MY FRIEND

JESSIE ELIZABETH BELL

THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR

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THE UNEXPECTED CHRIST.

"Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."—*Luke* xxiv. 15.

Most Bible-readers have taken it for granted that both of these two disciples of Christ who were taking this walk to Emmaus and to whom Christ paid this unexpected visit were men. Only one of them is named — Cleopas. Mr. Moody has recently raised a question which is new to me, but which seems to me to be very well sustained, suggesting that the disciple not named was Mary, the wife of Cleopas. John tells us that one of the three Marys who remained at the cross after the crucifixion of Jesus was Mary the wife of Cleopas, and I agree with Mr. Moody that it does not seem at all probable that Cleopas would go off into the country seven or eight miles and leave his wife in the city in the perilous times in the midst of which the disci-

ples found themselves after the trial and crucifixion of Christ. It seems, therefore, very reasonable to suppose that these two disciples mentioned were Cleopas and Mary, the uncle and aunt of Jesus.

These two near relatives and friends of Christ evidently had their home at Emmaus, and in this sad trial which had come to them in the death of one whom they had loved all his life, and whom during the last few years they had come to trust as their Redeemer and Lord, it was very natural that they should go to their home. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home"; and especially is this true in a time of sorrow. The curiosity of the world is very trying then, and one longs to get home, where he may be free from prying eyes and questioning tongues.

As they walked along the way they were talking over all the strange and wonderful events connected with the trial and crucifixion of the Saviour, dwelling on little details, no doubt, as one will, concerning a great tragedy which leaves the soul stunned and in awe. All their hopes were buried in the tomb, and the glory of the Easter truth had not yet illuminated their hearts. As they thus walked and talked, their attitude as well as their

words showing the sorrow which depressed them, a stranger drew near and joined them. He who appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden in the form of a gardener, to Abraham as a traveler, and to Joshua as a soldier, appeared to these disciples as some strange teacher, some wise rabbi, passing through the land. They did not know it was the Christ about whom they were sorrowing. A sure way to find Christ is to talk about him to another friend who loves him with the same tenderness as ourselves. The promise of his presence where two or three are gathered never fails. We rob ourselves of a great deal of Christian joy by hiding in our hearts, so often, the longing, hungry thoughts we have about Jesus. If we would talk more with each other concerning him our experience would be sweeter and richer.

Christ still comes to his disciples in unexpected places. It is not necessarily in the church that we shall find him, but wherever we need him and our longing hearts cry out for him we may expect him. He has not deserted his world. He visits the market-place now as in the days of old, and even a tax-collector may know his presence as did Zacchæus or Matthew. He does not fail to pause in

sympathy where the unfortunate are, and blind men and poor may yet hear the sympathetic call of him who stopped on the road to Jericho to open the eyes of blind Bartimæus. He who was the fishermen's friend by the little Sea of Galilee, and who liked to go fishing with Peter and John, and watch them as they mended their nets, will not scorn the docks or the fishing-boats of our own time. The Carpenter of Nazareth has not forgotten his brethren of the hammer and the saw. In all the common ways of life where men toil and dig, where they bargain and trade, where they feast or faint, where they rejoice at the wedding or mourn at the funeral, Christ is still in his world, and hearts going out after him in loving memory may not be surprised to find him coming to walk with them by the way. They may not always know who he is until he is gone, for that many times happens to us, but afterwards looking back we know that it was the Christ.

The presence of Christ communing with us, causing our hearts to burn with gladness, fills the Scriptures with meaning and makes the Bible yield treasures that on other days we would not find. You might bring me a basket of minerals from the Klondike, and looking

at them I would know that here and there a specimen contained gold, because I could see occasional points of a yellow tinge; but many other light and dark points I would not understand. But let a metallurgist glance at the specimens and he would not only know that they contained gold, but silver and lead and iron, and could indicate each metal. So to a man untaught of the Spirit the Bible will have here and there a hint of golden treasures, but when he comes under the teaching of Christ he sees revealed on every side riches before undreamed of. "There are promises in God's Word that no man has ever tried to find; treasures of gold and silver in it that no man has ever taken the pains to dig for. There are medicines in it for the want of a knowledge of which hundreds have died." Mr. Beecher once said that the Bible seemed to him like some baronial estate that has descended to a man who lives in a modern house and thinks it scarcely worth while to go and look into the venerable mansion. Year after year passes away, and he pays no attention to it, since he has no suspicion of the valuable treasures it contains, till at last some man says to him, "Have you been up in the country to look at that estate?" He makes up his

mind that he will take a look at it. As he goes through the porch he is surprised to see the skill that has been displayed in its construction; he is more and more impressed as he goes through the halls. He enters a large room, and is astonished as he beholds the wealth of pictures upon the walls, among which are portraits of many of his revered ancestors. He stands in amazement before them. There are splendid paintings by Titian and Raphael, and Correggio. He says, "I never had any idea of these before." "Ah!" says the steward, "there is many another thing that you know nothing about in this castle"; and the keeper takes him from room to room, and shows him carved plate, and wonderful statues, until the owner exclaims, "Here I have been for twenty years the owner of this estate, and have never before known what things were in it!" But there never was such an estate as God's Word. There are no such halls of paintings as those found in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are no such treasure-vaults of golden wisdom as may be found in its Proverbs; no such libraries of poetry as in the Psalms and the Book of Job. No wonder Cleopas and Mary remembered afterwards and said to each other,

"Did not our heart burn within us, while he opened unto us the Scriptures," for he began at Moses and came along down over the high plateaus of prophetic uplands, and set a blazing torch on the hill-tops where Moses, and David, and Isaiah and Daniel had foretold his own coming. To their astonishment the Old Testament Scriptures revealed a highway, lighted with the flame of prophetic light all the way from the beginning of Genesis, that led ever onward toward their own time and to the Messiah who had been their Leader. Christ will open the Scriptures like that to us when we meditate on him and on them.

The sweetest touch in the story is where they reach the home of Cleopas and his wife, and Jesus, who has not yet revealed himself to them, makes as if he would go on. We cannot doubt that he would have done so if they in their keen interest had not urged him to remain. Christ will not force his love upon us. It is ever the characteristic of a great love that it wishes to be desired and appreciated. But they constrained him to remain with them to their evening meal. I think with Mr. Moody that this is another indication of the fact that it was indeed Cleopas and

his wife, and not two men who were only friends stopping at the same place. A husband and his wife together might naturally give an urgent invitation to a stranger whose company had been so precious to them, and in the light of whose conversation their great sorrow had passed away and hope had taken its place. And while the evening meal is being prepared Christ talks with them, and after a while, when it is ready, he breaks bread with them, and tenderly blesses it, and in that act of worship he is revealed to their hearts and they know it is their risen Lord whose fellowship has given them such great joy.

Let us not fail to learn this great lesson: If you would come to know Christ as your risen Lord and Saviour you must not only meet him on the highway of human life, and listen to his conversation, and be moved to admiration at the charm of his presence, but you must constrain him to come home with you into your inner heart experience. If you constrain him to enter into that fellowship of soul he will not only charm you with his conversation, but he will dispel your sorrows, pardon your sins, and transform your life into his own likeness. No doubt I speak to some one who needs just this appeal. You have heard

of Christ many times, your heart has been drawn out to him in admiration, and you do not hesitate to admit that among all the names in history his is the fairest and the noblest. But all your meetings with him have been, as it were, upon the highway. You have never invited Christ into the temple of your own heart and home. Only in that way can you really come to know him and realize his power to save.

A minister in Philadelphia preached on a recent Sunday evening on "The Greed of Gold." He called special attention to the fact that at the bottom of most of the institutions of our land which hurt rather than help is the desire for wealth. Among other things he mentioned the liquor traffic. Early the next morning there came into this minister's study a fine-looking, intelligent man about forty years old. As he entered the room, before giving his name or telling his mission, he spoke thus, earnestly and nervously: "Is it better for a man to sell liquor or starve?" This was his story: He was the traveling representative for a large distillery in another city. In the interest of this business, for which he had been successfully soliciting for years, he came to Philadelphia. He had gone

to the church with another commercial traveler on Sunday evening, and the minister's sermon had been an arrow from the quiver of God straight to his heart. He left the church, went back to the hotel, sent that very night a letter to the firm for which he was traveling, and whose remuneration for his services was generous, resigning his position and saying that he could no longer conscientiously represent them. "And," said the manly man before he left the minister, "last night I slept with a sense of peace and security such as I have not enjoyed for years. I have no prospect for a new position, but upon this I am determined: I shall starve before I sell another drop of liquor. God help me!" At noon the next day the minister was in conversation with one of the leading business men of his church, to whom he told this story. Immediately upon hearing it the merchant said, "I am in need of just such a man." In less than twenty-four hours he was in an honorable position with a good salary, illustrating the words of Christ: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

THE EXPECTANT CHRIST.

"From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."— *Hebrews* x. 13.

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."— *Psalm* xxvii. 13, 14.

During the war of the rebellion, when victory was swaying from side to side, the commissioners from the Confederate States, in an interview, which they obtained with President Lincoln, sought to compromise with him on condition of the independence of a part of the States in rebellion. They knew the tender-heartedness of Mr. Lincoln, and appealed to him to stay the effusion of blood which, at the moment, was flowing in torrents. These commissioners were willing to forego several of the States for which they had hitherto fought if he would consent to the remainder

being independent. They pleaded with him for hours, and made use of the strongest arguments and considerations they could adduce to gain their object. When they had finished, the President, who had patiently and attentively listened to all that had been said, raised his hand, and then bringing it down with emphasis on the map which lay before him, replied: "Gentlemen, this government must have the whole."

Jesus Christ confidently expects the dawning of the day when all his enemies shall be made his footstool, and he shall hold sway over all the nations of men. Before his crucifixion he declared, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." His expectant eye ran down the line of history and saw the day when the cross would become a battle-cry for millions and a watchword for the liberty and hope of mankind.

It is this expectant attitude of Jesus which gave him while on the earth undying enthusiasm and ever-fresh courage. The fact that the majority was against him, that his gospel of peace and love and purity had all the hate and greed and bloodthirstiness of the world against it, never caused him to hesitate for a moment. To his expectant vision all the

devils were dethroned. Sure of his divine power, certain that love is stronger than hate, rejoicing in his beneficent mission to the world, his enthusiasm never waned in his struggle for the salvation of the human race. His hope was not in any earthly power, but in the saving influences of divine love.

If we turn from Christ to David, we find in him also a perennial fountain of enthusiasm and courage, because his hope was centered not on earthly things, but on the faithfulness and benevolence of God. Throughout all his youth, from the day that Samuel called him from his flock of sheep in the Bethlehem hills to pour the anointing oil on his head in prophecy of the day when he should be king, David was surrounded by enemies who were treacherous, cruel and powerful. Many times, like a hunted fox, he was chased to some den or cave on the mountain-side, and, like the Messiah that was to come, had not where to lay his head. But throughout all these experiences, in his psalms, which are the breathing out of his heart to God in bursts of thanksgiving or appeal inspired by his own experiences, you see revealed the secret of his lofty courage and unquenchable enthusiasm. His faith was not in man but in God. He was of-

ten deceived and found those whom he trusted to be treacherous, but he did not despair because of that. At such a time he would cry out:

"Put not your trust in princes,
Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth.
. . . . . .
Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope is in the Lord his God:
Which made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that in them is;
Which keepeth truth for ever:
Which executeth judgement for the oppressed;
Which giveth food to the hungry:
The Lord looseth the prisoners;
The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;
The Lord raiseth up them that are bowed down;
The Lord loveth the righteous;
The Lord preserveth the strangers;
He upholdeth the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.
The Lord shall reign for ever,
Thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
Praise ye the Lord."

What are you going to do with a man like that?— when some powerful prince has gone over to Saul, his enemy, and the news comes like a blow straight between the eyes, and he turns himself about and takes up his harp and

sings a song like that? Nothing earthly can daunt a man's enthusiasm whose expectancy is not in man but in God!

We lose our enthusiasm because it has been aroused by such little things, and is not nourished by a sufficiently worthy purpose.

About twenty-five years ago a farmer's wife up in the Province of Ontario was searching the woods surrounding their farm for a cow that had strayed, and, becoming thirsty, stooped to get a drink from a spring. Slipping, she fell against a small loose rock which rolled to her feet and which proved to be a twenty-pound nugget of almost pure gold. Within six months of this discovery a city called Bridgewater sprang into existence with five thousand inhabitants. An immense quarry of purest white marble was discovered near, and the town was practically built of marble. It is the only town in the world which has a hotel, church, school-house, court-house, and the great majority of its dwellings constructed of white marble. Strange to say, although enormous sums of money were spent in sinking shafts, there was never enough gold dug out of the entire district to pay for the sinking of a single shaft, and to-day that marble town is like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village,"

almost entirely without inhabitants. It was built up on a wave of enthusiasm that had no real gold-mine to back it. Who of us does not remember such deserted enthusiasms along the pathway of our own lives? There have been times when we have thrown our whole selves into something that has seemed of great importance and out of which we expected to obtain great good and blessing, but no real gold of happiness came from it, and to-day it is only a reminiscence of a deserted enthusiasm.

But I am sure that for every sincere Christian there is one enthusiasm that does not lose its interest as the years go on. Other interests may come and go, but if you have given your heart to Christ and come into personal communion and fellowship with him, then the happiness of serving him and the expectation of becoming like him and living with him in glory forever not only does not wane, but it waxes more splendid as the things of earth lose their hold with the passing years.

All great Christian work must be accomplished in this spirit of expectancy. We never can do our best when we go dragging our feet along the ground. The best work of

the world is done by people who walk on tiptoes in expectant attitude, rejoicing in the blessed privilege of Christian service. Such an expectancy of victory in our work for the Lord makes the smallest service worth doing. Lucy Rider Meyer tells of one of the Chicago deaconesses who was ill, and was taken to a hospital. While there she was put under the influence of chloroform for a surgical operation. As she began to recover consciousness, she looked up into the physician's face and murmured, "Doctor, what do you do with your old clothes?" She had her poor parish on her mind, and was all the while expecting a windfall in their direction. She had the same spirit in her work that gave Spurgeon, and has given every great soul-winner, his greatest power — the expectancy of victory. Spurgeon made a man feel while he preached that the preacher expected he would then and there give his heart to Christ. A young man who visited London went to hear Spurgeon in his great Tabernacle. He wrote home to his mother that night, "They tell me that there were six thousand people present; but it seemed to me while he was preaching as though I were the only one in the congregation, and he were pleading with me." God

give us the same expectation of victory in the performance of our daily duties!

This holy expectancy keeps us from fainting by the way. Well may David say, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"; but the heart that was ready to faint was nerved again by the conviction that it is not the devil's world, but God's. Though wicked men and devils may make a great deal of noise, no real harm can come to those who love God, and whose expectation is in him. What a splendid illustration of this same kind of holy expectancy of faith we had in Mr. Gladstone in the great suffering through which he passed in the closing days of his life! He courageously remarked one day to one of his friends who was condoling with him on his affliction, "It is a great lesson." How that takes all the bitterness out of it! He was not the plaything of some heartless chance, or the foot-ball of some cruel fate, but a pupil in God's school, and, just before his graduation into the mysteries and glories of the heavenly world, was learning a final lesson at the feet of the Divine Teacher to better fit him for the joys of heaven.

There must be some of us who need to learn

this lesson. Life is so full of sorrow and trouble, and there are so many burdens that make the heart weary and ready to faint, that I doubt not some of you need this message from God's Word to rouse your faithful expectancy from the things that try you and trouble you to the God who is your sure refuge and defence. When some unusual trouble comes to us, which seems hard to bear, and, it may be, has, so far as we can see, no relation to any wrong in us, it is hard to repress a sense of injustice and very natural for us to cry out in our smarting impatience, "What have I done that I should have to bear this cruel cross?" In such an hour we need to catch sight of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who pressed forward with joy toward the crown of thorns and the cross on Calvary, because his expectant soul saw the profound good that was to come to humanity and was satisfied. When we catch his spirit we will know that trouble does not necessarily mean that we have sinned, and most certainly not that God is angry with us, or is punishing us; but that in his infinite love he is seeking through discipline and cultivation to develop in us the noblest and grandest manhood or womanhood of which we are capable. Let us have our eye

on the splendid results that are to be attained through this divine teaching and discipline.

How insignificant will these burdens seem when the days of burden-bearing are over and we stand to be crowned before our Lord! I was greatly impressed in reading a single sentence by Mr. Landor, the explorer, who was captured while trying to make an entrance into the sacred city of Thibet. He was treated with the most awful cruelty, and underwent as brutal torture as any man, perhaps, ever experienced who survived to tell the story. Finally he escaped to his friends, his wounds were ministered to, and he had opportunity for food and nursing. His normal high spirits, that were beginning to fade away, came back as by magic. His sentence which inspired and thrilled me was this: "It is strange how one moment of happiness makes you forget months of hardships and sufferings." Mr. Landor is wrong. It is marvelous, but not strange. God has set the world to that key. Joy shall forever conquer pain. Let us lift our souls into this expectant spirit. Let us rest our hearts on God's promises and live in that spirit day by day. We are the children of God, and are marching onward to eternal victory. One day in heaven

will make us forget all the sorrowing experiences of fourscore years of earthly life. The times of burden-bearing and hardship will, as we look back on them, catch a glow of beauty from the lessons we have learned, and the graces which have been developed in the school of the Spirit and by the hard side of life will never be remembered except with thanksgiving for the wisdom and tenderness with which God has led us.

THE LOST CHRIST.

"Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple."—*Luke* ii. 43–46.

MARY and Joseph set a bad example. People have been losing Christ in the city ever since their day. Joseph and Mary lived in a country town and not many people came to the quaint little carpenter shop in Nazareth. The city was so full of interest, and there were so many things to see, that they forgot to take special care to know that Christ was with the company when they left. A great many people bring Christ to the city with them, but allow the new sights and interests which crowd upon them in the city streets to draw

their thoughts away from him. The jostling, noisy crowd awes them, and they get timid and afraid that somebody will notice their great love for Christ, and they go feasting their eyes on all the worldly things that are new to them until they have lost Jesus out of their hearts and lives.

The conductor and other railroad officials at Oakland, California, were puzzled one day over a mysterious passenger who arrived there on the Central Overland train. A young woman was found sitting among her baggage in one of the cars when the train arrived, and appeared disposed to remain. Being informed that she was at the end of the route, she looked up in a bewildered way and tried to speak, but could not. After a time she recovered her voice, but was unable to give any account of herself. She could not remember where she came from, nor whither she was going, nor even her own name. She made a brave mental struggle to answer the questions put to her, but gave it up in despair. She had apparently full possession of all her faculties except that of memory, and that was a complete blank. She was finally sent to a hospital to see if the doctors could give her any help, while the police sought for her

friends. It was a pitiable condition, doubtless the result of some form of disease of the brain. So utter a lapse of memory is uncommon, but many people who have been brought up in Christian homes, and have been taught to read the Bible and pray and trust Christ from childhood, come to the city from the farm, or the village, and in worldly society, or places of sinful amusement, seem to forget all about the Christ whose gracious presence made beautiful and sweet their childhood and youth.

In the case of Joseph and Mary starting home without Jesus we have a very striking illustration of the fact that *suppositions* are very poor things in which to trust. They *supposed* he was with their company. They did not take the trouble to make sure, but took it for granted that he was along. After they had made a whole day's journey from Jerusalem their hearts began to get lonely for the lad and they looked about to find him. Suppositions will not feed an aching heart. Homesickness and loneliness must cast eyes on the object that is beloved. When they began to search among the company of friends and kinsfolk, it soon became apparent that their easy-going suppositions had no base-work of

fact, and that all day long they had been going away from Jesus. They are a type of many others in this respect. People go along supposing it is all right, but get careless and worldly and do not search their hearts daily to find out whether Jesus is with them or not. Sometimes when I ask a man if he is a Christian, he answers, "Oh, I suppose so." But one must always doubt the background of such an answer. The Christian religion is one to be tested by experience. In its very essence it is a personal friendship and communion with Christ. I know whether I have seen my friend to-day or not. If a man should ask me whether I am living in close touch and fellowship with some personal friend, I would not be likely to say, "I suppose so." I would know about it. Let us ask ourselves some heart-searching questions concerning our relation to Christ. When did you meet Jesus last? When did you have deep and tender conversation and communion with him in your heart of hearts? Or is it true that in the multitude of other things you have forgotten about him, and have been going days and weeks without calling yourself to account and questioning whether Christ is really in your company or not?

If Joseph and Mary set a bad example in losing Christ, they certainly set a good example in this: that they refused to go farther away from the place where they lost him, but started back at once for Jerusalem, determined to seek for him there until they found him. They made a blunder, however, when they got to the city. For three days they went searching about the streets from one place to another before they thought of going to the temple. They might have found him the very first day instead of the third if they had gone straight to the temple. I suspect they scarcely thought to find him when they went there. Possibly they were so worn out and disheartened that they went to the temple with broken hearts, to pray to God for comfort, and to ask for divine wisdom in their search. One thing is sure: whatever drove them there drove them to Jesus.

The temple — the church — is still the best place to find Jesus. Some of you have been restless and uneasy because of your sins, and you have been trying to find happiness and peace. You have gone everywhere else searching for rest, but the place to find it is here, at the mercy seat. Wherever you find Jesus, there you will find peace and rest. Christ is

always keeping tryst in the church where his name is loved and honored, and at the altar where men seek him with penitence and faith. No matter how blindly you seek him here, if you are only honestly feeling after him you shall find him.

Horace Bushnell, the great New England preacher, found Christ in a strange way. He was a professor in Yale College, and lived a very correct moral life, but knew nothing of Christ or the joys of salvation. A great revival began in New Haven, and swept through the college. Scores of young men were being converted. A large company of young men who were Bushnell's pupils, and who greatly admired him, stood out against the revival influence, following his example. He became convinced that he was doing wrong in influencing these young men against Christ. One day he said to a fellow-professor: "I must get out of this woe. Here I am, and these young men hanging to me in their indifference, amidst this universal earnestness." He had long been troubled by doubts, and was not sure whether he believed in Christ, or even in a God. Finally he inquired of himself: "Is there, then, no truth I do believe? Yes, there is one. I never doubted a distinc-

tion between right and wrong. Have I, then, ever taken the principle of right for my law? No. Here, then, I will begin. If there is a God, he is a right God. If I have lost him in wrong, perhaps I will find him in right. I will do the truth I know." He dropped on his knees and began to pray, and as he prayed light burst in through his darkness, and the Christ appeared to him, as never before, "the One altogether lovely." That very night he sent word to his students, and when they came he told them of the great sunrise that had come to his heart. They fell upon their knees around him, sobbing and weeping, and were nearly all converted. Some of the students afterwards declared that so marvelous was his spiritual power that first night of his new life that when he left the room at the close of that memorable service he seemed to be followed by a blaze of glory.

The Christ that revealed himself to Bushnell when he thus searched after him, though blindly, will also reveal himself to you if you will only seek for him.

It is said that the most simple and kind-hearted monarch in the world to-day is King Oscar of Sweden. He is a tall and fine-looking man, and is adored by the Swedes, who

frequently find themselves brought into closer and more familiar relations with him than is generally the case between subjects and their sovereign. The king has a day every week when he is at home to any of his people who care to come to see him. The only formality consists in the visitor sending up his card, whereupon he is immediately ushered into the royal presence, and received with a simplicity and friendliness which entirely do away with nervousness.

Our King, Christ, is at home to the humblest and poorest not only one day in the week, but all the days. His ear is ever open to hear our plea, his hand and smile are ever ready to bless and comfort us. The only barrier between our hearts and Christ is the sin which keeps us from coming to him. There is no sin which his love is not great enough to pardon and forgive if we will come to him in humility and trust. How foolish we would consider any subject of the King of Sweden who required royal help to relieve him from some oppressive burden, who yet went on carrying his load in sorrow rather than avail himself of the opportunity which that gracious king has provided! Yet that is what some of you have been doing for a long time. You

have been carrying a heavy burden of sin and sorrow, without necessity, for not a day has passed but Christ has been willing to lift the weight from your weary shoulders and dispel the sorrow from your heart. I beg of you who have lost the way to the mercy seat, that you will find it again now! Come to Christ's altar, confessing your sins, and Christ will meet you there in gracious forgiveness.

There was once a remarkable picture in the old Spanish cathedral in Seville. A thief who feared neither God nor man, hoping to obtain a large ransom for its recovery, cut this picture out of its frame and carried it away. This bold and sacrilegious robbery served to spread the fame of the picture to the ends of the earth. It represented Saint Anthony of Padua, kneeling in the cell of his convent, waiting and praying, with arms outstretched, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, would let him clasp to his breast the little Christ-child. The old monk is kneeling in the shadows on the stone floor of his cell. The brown hood and gray garb of the Capuchin friar have fallen back from his eager, supplicating face. The girdle of knotted cord hangs loosely at his side. Out of the shadow deepening slowly into the darkness of the cell his face shines

with an anguish of pleading love. He looks as if all his life had been sore and hard; as if he had wearied and was ready to faint by the way; as if his only hope of strength to rise up and go on the hard path of life was in the joy and strength that might come to him from the smile and touch of the Christ-child. And, as he gazes, he sees the clouds part, and down through the radiance the virgin mother comes with the child extended in her arms, as if she would lay the little golden head, crowned with its aureola of light, upon the old monk's breast.

If I speak to any heart that is weary and sad with the struggle of life, longing for some new hope and inspiration that will give new impulse and meaning to your human living, I have the promises of God's Word to assure you that as in the old legend God gave Jesus to the waiting arms of the weary monk of Padua, he will give him to your heart if you make for him a place, and to whomsoever Christ comes there will come renewal of hope. Where Jesus is there is new life, new vigor, and the heart is renewed again with the glory of springtime. There is something glorious in that statement of Jesus to the disciples, that we must come to him like little children.

Thank God, a man scarred by sin and broken down by troubles may, through the mercy and tenderness of God's grace, come back again to the gentleness and hopefulness of childhood. Come to the mercy seat, and find again your lost childhood and your lost hope in finding the lost Christ!

THE BORROWING CHRIST.

"The Lord hath need of him." — *Mark* xi. 3.

The ministry of Jesus Christ was drawing to a close. The Passover day arrived, and the Master sent his disciples into the city to secure a colt upon which he was to ride into Jerusalem. He told them to go to a certain place and there they would find tied a young colt on whose back no man had ever ridden. They were to untie this colt and bring it to him. If any one sought to interfere with them, or inquired into their reason, they were to simply say that he had need of it. In all probability the colt belonged to some acquaintance or friend of Christ on whose kindness and generosity he felt sure he could rely in a time like this. They went as directed, and, on telling the owner who it was that desired the animal, were permitted to bring it to Christ. We can well imagine that any friend of Jesus

would have been very happy indeed to accommodate him with so slight a loan of his property. This incident may suggest a far more important loan which Christ asks of every one of us. The Lord hath need of us, and of the treasures which we are able to put at his disposal. We are usually accustomed to look at it on the other side. Our own needs are so great that prayer very often takes the form simply of petition and appeal in behalf of our own necessities. There is, however, something very inspiring and comforting in the thought that he also has need of us.

The strong needs the weak as often as the weak needs the strong. The little helpless babe has need of the mother's brooding tenderness and the father's strong arm of protection, but the father and mother also have need of the love and nestling trust of the little child. Christ needs our love and devotion. By every art of a great soul's tenderness he has sought to draw us into secret prayer and communion which are seasons of love-talk with Christ. It is in such seasons of inner fellowship that we gain those resources of spiritual character and strength that make it possible for us to help forward the work of our Lord in public. As a tree has a large

part of its life in the roots underground out of sight, so every public deed of importance has its background of invisible preparation. Just now there is a good deal of speculation in the newspapers about the naval battles of the future, which they claim will be fought under the water, out of sight. If that should prove true it would only be in harmony with what is true now of the greatest battles in every one of our lives. For, after all, the greatest struggles that any one of us know are the invisible, unjournalized battles that are fought out in our hearts.

When you see a man or woman doing saintly deeds of self-sacrificing devotion in the name of Jesus, you may be sure that in secret places they have given themselves to his divine hand. Did you ever hear the chime of bells ringing out some old hymn-tune from the tower of a great cathedral and wonder how it was played? If you would see the musician you must go into a little chime-room on the ground floor, hidden away from public view, and there, at a key-board looking very much like that of an old-fashioned melodeon, you will see possibly a young girl, playing away as quietly as though she were playing the tune for the hymn at evening prayers. But the

electric current connected with her keys touches the great bells in the cathedral tower and sets them in motion and harmonious ringing. No force is exerted more than the organist uses in playing, but the bells peal out a cheerful invitation to the passers-by. The busy throng half pause, look up and remember that a service is about to begin; a few turn their steps toward the church and silently pass in and find others here and there through the great auditorium, called out from the rush of the street — souls that long for quiet and for worship called together by the music of the great bells overhead that was all awakened by the touch of a girl's fingers on the key-board in the chime-room. Every human heart that surrenders itself to Jesus Christ becomes a chime-room where invisible keys are touched by the great Musician who awakens a melody of life that is full of the sweetness of heaven.

The Lord has need of our testimony — the testimony of our cheerful faces and our happy hearts. Not long ago a man of my acquaintance gave his heart to Christ, and has since lived a very happy Christian, who for a long time prior to his conversion had been so eaten up by care and anxiety that he had been a

dyspeptic. His religion had the happy effect of healing not only his mind and heart, but his body. When he became happy in the consciousness of the forgiveness of his sins, and rejoiced in peace with God, his mind was at rest. He quit worrying. He did not fret. He slept well. He had a good appetite and digested his food without difficulty. He had a friend who was an infidel, who did not believe in the Bible, or in Christ, and who was also a dyspeptic. They had been accustomed to meet and lunch together in a restaurant. When the skeptic saw that his friend's dyspepsia was gone he was anxious to know what had cured him. And when he was told, with a happy, sincere face behind it, that it was the joyous heart that had come to him through Jesus Christ, you may be sure that it aroused that man's attention as a thousand sermons from the pulpit never could have done, and the skeptic has promised to go with his Christian friend to church, and give himself a fair chance to meet with the same cure. There is no such evidence of Christianity as the testimony of a transformed life made happy by the Saviour's presence.

Many years ago a distinguished physician of Philadelphia left his house one morning

and was hurrying down the street when he noticed a peculiar and ferocious-looking man whose gaze was fastened upon him. Being one of the most kind and polite of men, he smiled benignly, raised his hat, and passed on, when suddenly he heard a shot. Turning, he found that the stranger had just left his home with the insane intention of killing the first man he met. He was the first man; but his kind face and gentle smile had thrown the man off his guard, and the next passer-by had caught the bullet intended for him. That smile and bow saved his life.

In the early days of the colonies in America, a gentleman upon the frontier was hunting with his friends, when he became separated from them and completely lost his way. Every effort to retrieve his steps led him still farther into the wilderness, and night overtook him in a dense forest. Overcome with fatigue, he lay down under a tree and slept heavily. In the morning he awoke with a start, oppressed with that indescribable feeling that some one was looking at him, and, glancing up, saw that he was surrounded by hostile Indians, and that the chief of the band, in war-paint and feathers, was bending over him with bitter hate depicted in his

features. He took in the situation at a glance —knew his immediate danger, and had no means of averting it; neither did he understand a word of their language. But he was self-possessed, knew the universal language of nature, and believed that even under war-paint and feathers "a man's a man for a' that." He fixed his clear eye upon the Indian, and—smiled! Gradually the fierceness passed away from the eye above him, and at last an answering smile came over the face. Both were men—both were brothers—and he was saved! The savage took him under his protection, brought him to his wigwam, and after a few days restored him to his friends. His kindly smile had saved his life. No man can tell the power—or, rather, exaggerate the power—of Christian good cheer—the power of a human life that is completely surrendered to Christ to reveal to men and women who are in sorrow and discouragement and sin the cheerfulness, the hopefulness, the infinite love of Jesus Christ. In no way can we bless the world so much as to lend ourselves to Jesus for that purpose.

The Lord needs us to encourage and inspire others with the hope of salvation. There was sold the other day in London at a public

auction the famous trumpet upon which Trumpet-Major Joy, of the Seventeenth Lancers, sounded the order for the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. That little piece of metal brought four thousand dollars because of the famous charge which it once sounded. But I would rather a thousand times use my voice, whether in public or in private conversation, to inspire some sin-discouraged soul to begin its march toward heaven with faith in Christ's love, than to blow the trumpet for a thousand charges like that of the Light Brigade, which sent them to death and disaster. For when we use our voices as a trumpet for Jesus Christ we never send men to death, but to life. No other work will ever give you so much joy and gladness as that. I knew a woman, a faithful Christian, but one who was timid about speaking to others concerning salvation, who in the midst of a revival became interested in a man who was deeply under conviction of sin. Others pleaded with him, but he stubbornly held out against the Spirit's moving, and their pleading. Finally she summoned up courage to whisper to him her timid word of invitation, which seemed to be just the trumpet-call he needed, and he surrendered himself to Christ. Afterwards when

that man would rise to speak in the meeting with a boldness of which she herself had never dreamed, her face would light up with joy, and his testimony was the sweetest music to her ear, because he was her convert. Christ had used her words for his salvation.

Let us remember that Christ needs us for the salvation of those about us, to whom it is possible for us to introduce him.

But if Christ needs us, how much more apparent it is that we need him. Useless we are without him. We get our value when we come to him and yield ourselves to his hands. The gold lying in the dirt and rock of the mountains is as useless as any base metal; but the gold in the miner's hands, the gold in the mint under the stroke of the die that stamps upon it the nation's honor — how much dignity has come to it now! Christ comes offering to take you out of the mire and the clay, out of the dirt and rock of sin; to cleanse and purify you from all the filth of evil ways; to put upon you the badge of the cross, the insignia of his own love; to put his own good name in your hands and send you forth to represent him in bearing blessings to mankind.

THE BLESSED KING.

"Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."— *Mark* xi. 9.

THE Christian religion is a religion of enthusiasm. It is not mere cold logic of righteousness and justice — it is righteousness glorified; it is justice aglow with mercy. To be a Christian is to be like Christ, and Christ is humanity in earnest for goodness. There was enthusiasm over the birth of Jesus. The angels who came to sing the anthem about Jesus to the shepherds were happy angels, filled to overflowing with enthusiastic delight. They could not contain their joy, but shouted aloud their "Glory to God in the highest!" John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, was a man of great enthusiasm whose magnetic earnestness was so contagious that it drew multitudes out from the city into the wilderness to hear his flaming words. Christ himself throughout

all his ministry gave to every one who came in contact with him the impression that he was an earnest, enthusiastic soul. He had the quality, also, of arousing enthusiasm in others, and on the day when he came into Jerusalem to eat the Passover feast with his disciples his friends gave vent to their loyalty and devotion in shouts of praise, crying out their "Hosannas!" and casting their garments and palm-branches in the way over which he was to travel. Some people who were looking on, who were great sticklers for the proprieties, asked Jesus to forbid the people this extravagant expression of their gladness, but the Master refused to interfere with them. He declared that it was natural and proper. That, indeed, if they were to hold their peace the very stones along the wayside would cry out their praises unto his name.

I am very sure that many circles of modern Christianity need to re-learn this great truth that enthusiasm in Christian service and praise is the normal and not the extraordinary thing. Christianity is robbed of its power to bless and comfort and save in many churches, because it is shorn of the fervor and pathos which rightfully belong to it. A man is ever at his best in hours of enthusiasm

and devotion. If we were to choose a time when we would like to have our personality remembered by those who are dear to us, and whose good opinion we most fondly crave, it would be the time when we are mentally and morally aroused to some high and holy passion for a noble cause. Charles Dickens, in "David Copperfield," pictures the parting that took place between the two young men, Steerforth and Copperfield. Young Steerforth, placing both his hands upon Copperfield's shoulders, says: "Let us make this bargain! If circumstances should separate us, and you should see me no more, remember me at my best." The great novelist was true to human nature when he put that sentence on the lips of Steerforth. We all have a desire to be remembered at our best, and we are never at our best except when we are enthusiastic.

Our Christianity is a religion not only of truth and righteousness, but it is full of singing and praise. David's expression of salvation from sin was: "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." The great oratorios and the famous choruses have all been inspired by the enthusiasm of the Christian faith. The Christian soul bubbles over in music and shoutings of thanksgiv-

ings. The poet gives a true insight into the spirit of Christianity incarnate in a human life in the verse:

> "My life flows on in endless song
> Above earth's lamentation;
> I catch the sweet though far-off hymn
> That hails a new creation;
> The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
> A fountain ever springing;
> All things are mine since I am his,
> How can I keep from singing?"

Christ has this power of arousing the human soul to its loftiest courage and noblest devotion. Every strong personality has power to exalt or depress those who are weaker. Indeed, we should each be astonished if we knew the influence which we exert either in disheartening and discouraging those whom we meet in the most casual way, or in arousing in them the spirit of hopefulness and good cheer. Some people have the power to evoke that which is best and strongest in every one with whom they come in contact; others again arouse that which is worst.

A teacher once asked her little scholars if they wished to take part in a Fourth of July celebration by marching in the procession. She spoke happily of the music, the banners,

the crowd who would be looking on, and then inquired, "How many will march?" Every hand went up. Then she changed her manner and spoke in doleful tones of the long dusty road, the heat, the loss of their dinner, ending with the inquiry, "How many of you really think you would like to march?" Only three or four hands went up, and they were very timid and doubtful. Again with an animated voice she spoke of the bright side of the occasion and of the beauty of keeping in remembrance deeds of heroism, ending, "How many will go?" Every hand went up with a will. The teacher was playing upon a musical instrument more susceptible than any organ or piano. So it is that we are always either cursing or blessing one another. Christ is the matchless leader of humanity because he has the power to arouse every noble quality into its best life.

Christ has the power to cause common duties to appear glorious with the glow of romantic and heroic motives. Goethe tells the story of a rude fisherman's hut which was transformed to silver by the placing in it of a little silver lamp. It was a homely old place, built of logs, but in his fairy story its rude floors, its heavy doors, its unsightly roof and ugly fur-

niture were all transformed to shining silver by that magic lamp. What was only a creation of Goethe's imagination is more than realized in actual fact when a human heart opens the door to the incoming of Christ. Not only is the entire character transformed, so that the evil things that were once loved are now loathed and hated, while the good things that were once indifferent or undesirable are now admired and loved, but the whole life is transformed when one comes into fellowship with Jesus Christ. Duties that have seemed unlovely and repulsive when looked at from a distance by a heart unchanged by Christian love, are transfigured with glory when they are performed for Christ's sake. Christian love is a magic lamp which changes all these hard restraints and burdens into the silver of loving service. The Christian comes to know that even drudgery is blessed if it strengthens his soul in patience and enlarges his nature in brotherly sympathy. Hardships and trying experiences lose all their bitterness when he can look at them as Paul looked at his scars, and count them "the marks of the Lord Jesus."

It is but a step from laughter to tears, from the shouts of Christian joy to the passionate

tenderness that weeps over the sinful, and we see both in this picture of Christ. One moment the glad shout of "Hosanna!" is ringing in his ears, and the smile of loving appreciation is on his face; the next moment his glance has taken in the wicked city that had rejected him and was to crucify him, and in an agony of grief the tears pour like rain down his cheeks as he cries out, "How oft would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not!"

Surely there is nothing more blessed about Jesus Christ than his infinite compassion toward those whose sins and hardness of heart are bringing them into sorrow and despair. A Jewish surgeon was working among the wounded soldiers in the hospital just after the battle of Gettysburg. He was about to operate on a young man who declined to inhale chloroform to deaden the pain. When the doctor urged it, fearing he would not live through the operation, the young soldier said: "I have a Saviour whom I love and trust. He will support me."

For such a faith the Jewish doctor could feel no sympathy. To him it was superstition, and homage to Christ was only a foolish

idolatry. He suggested to his patient that he might at least take a little brandy.

The wounded man looked up with mingled pleading and resolve in his eyes. "My father died a drunkard," he said, "and my mother has prayed ever since that I might be kept from indulging in strong drinks. I am nineteen years old, and I do not know the taste of liquor. I suppose I must die soon, and be in the presence of Christ. Would you have me leave the world for his presence intoxicated?"

The surgeon was silenced. As he said years afterwards, "I hated Jesus, but I respected the boy." He did what he had never done before — sent for the chaplain of the regiment, who knew the young soldier and could talk with him. He saw the brave boy give the chaplain his Bible, and heard his last message to his mother.

"I am ready now, doctor."

During the operation the young hero lay whispering prayers and murmuring the name of his Master.

Five days passed, and there was some hope of life. Then a change came. The surgeon was suddenly sent for.

"Doctor, it's nearly over. I want you to stay and see me die. You do not love my

Saviour; but I have been praying that he would teach you to love him."

But the doctor would not remain. He could not bear to see the Christian boy die rejoicing in the love of One whom he had been taught to hate.

The heroic youth soon breathed his last, and the surgeon tried to forget him. But the young soldier's dying words followed and distressed him for years, till one evening he went into a Christian meeting, determined to surrender his heart to Christ.

At that meeting an elderly lady told of her boy, "now in heaven," who had lost a limb and his life at Gettysburg, and how he had prayed for his surgeon, who was an enemy to Christ. The Jew started to his feet as soon as she had done. "My sister," he said, "the blessed Lord heard your dear boy's prayer. I am that surgeon, and since I came into this meeting I have been led to love him whom I once hated."

Our blessed King is as full of tenderness and compassion to you as he was to that Jewish surgeon, and if you will come back from your wandering, you will find home and welcome in his heart.

There is a quaint old custom which still

clings to the House of Commons in England and marks the termination of its every sitting. The moment the House is adjourned, stentorian-voiced messengers and policemen cry out in the lobbies and corridors: "Who goes home?" "Who goes home?" For centuries, during the sessions of Parliament, these mysterious words have sounded every night through the Palace of Westminster. The custom dates from a time when it was necessary for members to go home in parties accompanied by soldiers for common protection from the highwaymen who infested the streets of London. But though that danger has long since passed away, the question, "Who goes home?" is still asked, night after night.

I sound that old question in your ears. Many a danger lurks beside the way of life, and those who go without a guide and without protection are ever and anon beset and destroyed. But Christ will guide you home. Who goes home?

THE COST OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."—*Luke* xiv. 28–33.

This passage with its striking illustrations is very pertinent and interesting at the present moment. At this season of the year, when on every hand the workmen are digging deep that they may lay the solid foundations for new buildings, and in the present emergency when the whole world is taking interest in the war-cloud which hangs over our nation, we

are able to appreciate both of these significant figures. The parable suggests the earnest and serious character of a Christian life. It is not a mere matter of impulse, or simply turning over a new leaf, the signing of a pledge or making of a new resolution. It is far more important than that. Christ compares it to the building of a tower, or the going to war, and advises that upon entering upon so important a matter it is highly essential that a man shall sit down and count the cost, and fully make up his mind to the thoroughgoing conditions which are at the foundation of a Christian life. It is my desire to briefly, but frankly, count the cost with some of you who have not yet entered on a Christian life.

First, it should be understood that to become a Christian costs every sin that you have. Sins must be not only deplored and repented of in the sense that you feel sorry for and regret them, but they must be resolutely thrown overboard. It is easy to see what Christ thinks of it when he declares in substance that if you have a sin that is as dear to you as a right eye, you must pluck it out and cast it away; or if it be dear as a right arm, you must deliberately cut it off and bury it out of sight forever. Christ never lowers

the standard of discipleship. He always demands of everybody as the very first condition of conversion a thorough repentance of every known sin.

Pezon, the great French lion-tamer, owed his success to the use of electricity in taming his beasts. When a wild lion or tiger was to be tamed, live wires were first rigged up in the cage between the tamer and the animal. After a time Pezon would turn his back, and the treacherous creature would invariably make a leap at him, but on encountering the charged wires would receive a paralyzing shock. This lesson rarely had to be repeated, as the mysterious shock was not readily forgotten. There have been many efforts in the past to tame the human soul and give peace to the human heart in some such way as that, but they have always failed. Christ's way is not to frighten the appetites and lusts and passions of sinful human nature into an artificial docility, but to cleanse the heart of every evil thing. Christ met many people in his ministry who were so possessed by evil spirits that every form of discipline and punishment had failed to heal them or tame them, but when he had bidden the evil spirits depart they became his obedient and loving disciples

If you would be a Christian, decide at once to cut loose from every sin. Only in that way may you have the blessings of forgiveness and the joy and gladness of the Christian life.

To be a Christian will cost you, also, the giving up of your self-righteousness. If ever a man could plead his self-righteousness, it would have been the rich young ruler who came to Christ claiming that he had kept all ten of the commandments, according to the law of Moses, from his youth up, and whose life was so correct and beautiful in many ways that Jesus looking on him loved him. But Christ saw that he based his great hope of happiness upon the comforts that came to him from his earthly possessions, and told him that he must sell all that he had and give to the poor and follow him. Correct as the young man thought he was, when it really came to the point of going out from his beautiful home and sharing the wandering fate of Jesus, he went away with a frown on his brow. The trouble was that down at the heart, underneath all the pleasant exterior, he was proud and self-willed and would not surrender his will in obedience to Christ.

There is in the North Sea an island called

Keldive, which contains perhaps the most curious lake in the world. The surface of its waters is quite fresh, and supports fresh-water creatures and fresh-water vegetation; but deep down it is as salt as the bluest depths of the sea, and sponges and salt-water fish live and have their being there, to the despair of the scientists. Nansen found much the same thing during his drift in the *Fram* across the polar sea. He was often able to find perfectly fresh water on the surface of the sea, for drinking purposes, while a few feet underneath it would be the saltest brine. There are many people whose hearts are like that. They have grown up in the midst of Christian civilization, and have been so influenced by Christian standards in conversation and conduct that many people taking only casual observation imagine that their goodness is as true as if they were sincere Christians. Sometimes these people are very self-complacent about themselves and very proud of their own morality. They congratulate themselves that they are as good as their genuine, whole-hearted Christian neighbors. But it is all on the surface, though often unconsciously so. Let some sudden emergency arise, let some great temptation, or heart-probing trial,

awaken the profound depths of the soul, and up through this sweet surface sentiment that has seemed so true will boil the salt brine of a sinful and selfish heart. Be sure that what the heart is in its depths it will some time be throughout. Christ saves by cleansing the whole heart fountain. Make the fountain pure and all the streams that flow from it will be clean and sweet. If the heart is pure throughout you may stir the waters of life to the very bottom in the stress of trial and temptation, and you will bring up nothing but the life-giving water.

To become a Christian costs a public confession of faith in Christ, and a brave and honest following after Christ throughout our lives. To be a Christian is to be a sincere and loving friend of Christ and have a willingness to share his fate. While Captain Dreyfus, the disgraced French army officer, is passing his days in maddening solitude on Devil's Island, his wife is making every effort to join him, that she may share his fate. The political prisoners of France who are sent into exile are usually accorded the privilege of having their wives with them if they so desire, and many a brave Frenchwoman has given up home and friends, and has sacrificed every-

thing to be near her husband in his time of tribulation. Although Captain Dreyfus is being treated with the most horrid cruelty, being kept in an iron cage, like a wild beast, cut off entirely from communication with the outside world, his wife is not only willing but eager to share her husband's lot, and is fully prepared to submit to the same rigorous discipline as that imposed upon him. How soon we could capture the world for Christ if every man and woman who professed discipleship to him were as thoroughly devoted and faithful as this heroic woman is to her husband! Yet the relation of husband and wife is the very illustration that Christ uses to show the relation between himself and the church. In becoming a Christian we pledge to the Lord an open and faithful fellowship and service. The church is often hindered in its progress by the compromising entanglements which its members make with the world. We have no right to desire to be more popular and successful than is compatible with being perfectly true to Christ. If Jesus must go into exile, we should be ready to go with him, with brave hearts and shining faces.

While a Christian life brings infinite peace, and the only deep and abiding peace which it

is possible for us to have in this world, it also calls us to be soldiers and enter into war. We are to fight the devil, and are to seek to destroy his works. We can make no compromise with any sin that fights Christ or hurts mankind without dishonor to our Lord.

It is this earnest, thoroughgoing, heroic life to which I call you when I ask you to be a Christian. I do not mean any mere play on the surface of things; I am asking you to summon all the forces of your will and surrender all that you have and are to Jesus Christ. And I stand ready to prove to you that, costing as much as it does, it is the most profitable investment that any man can make. All that you have to give up is either your sins which are harmful to you, or some temporary advantage which will soon pass away, while the blessings which will come to you as a Christian will endure forever.

The tenure by which we hold earthly power and riches is very frail. There was a strange auction in London the other day. The treasures to be sold were the mummies of three royal personages. One of these was what was left of the mortal form of a once proud queen of Babylon in the palmy days of its national glory; one was Philadelphus, the son of the

greatest of the Ptolemies; and the third was a once powerful king of Assyria. Accompanying the mummies were letters from Dr. Birch of the British Museum and other famous scholars, which certified to these facts. They were all three sold for seventy-five guineas. Once they could make the whole proud world tremble at a frown or the wave of a hand; but now, thousands of miles from their native land, their poor dust, torn from the gorgeous tombs in which they were once laid with pomp and glory, has become goods for auction among curiosity-seekers. It is only the treasures of the soul that last. Death has no power to bring them to the dust.

The Queen of Austria is said to be mistress of the finest collection of jewels in Europe. The jeweled arms are quite magnificent, among them being the lance of St. Maurice, blazing with precious stones. The regalia of Charlemagne, taken from his tomb at Aix-la-Chapelle, is also in her jewel-box. She is a great lover of emeralds, and one of her prettiest ornaments is a watch composed of one dark emerald hanging on a chain of emeralds and diamonds, which was a gift from the late Shah of Persia. God compares those who yield their hearts to him to serve him loyally to crown

jewels, and assures us that out of all the beautiful things in the universe he has chosen loving human hearts to be his peculiar treasure "when he cometh to make up his jewels." All that we can give up is a small price to pay for the immortal glory that shall come to us as the crown jewels of the heavenly world.

Death loses all its shadows to the soul that has lost all, and gained all, for Christ's sake. As Frances Willard lay quietly waiting for her summons, on the morning of her departure, she said suddenly: "Come, dear, sing my favorite hymn." And Miss Gordon sang, "Gently, Lord, oh, gently lead us." Afterwards a friend came in, and she said, with a happy smile: "Dear Clara, I have crept in with mother." Her faithful heart had never ceased to yearn for this dear mother who had passed to the better land before her. It was the morning after the explosion of the battleship *Maine*, and the air was full of wars and rumors of wars; but these did not reach that calm death-bed. Asking Miss Gordon to take her picture of Hoffman's "Christ" to Lady Henry Somerset, she said: "Have engraved on the top of it, 'Only the golden rule of Christ can bring the golden age of man.' Below engrave, 'Neither do I condemn thee: go, and

sin no more.'" A little later, smiling upon those around her, she uttered her last words: "How beautiful to be with God!" Surely Frances Willard found that the Christian life was worth all it cost and a thousand times more, and it shall be so to every one of you who will pay the price of a whole-hearted surrender of yourself to Jesus.

THE CORNER-STONE OF A NOBLE LIFE.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." — *Eph.* ii. 19, 20.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of all that is noblest and best in our human lives. When a man becomes a Christian he comes into close relation with the best company, whether in history, or literature, or among living men, that the world has ever known. Paul puts this thought very strongly here. In becoming Christians we become fellow-citizens with such men as Enoch, who walked with God; as Abraham, who was the friend of God; as Joseph, the wise and heroic statesman, whose bough of humanity ran over the wall in abundant blessing to his age. We become brothers of such men as Moses, who chose rather to

suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; we join in the anthem of confidence in God with Miriam, the sweet singer of Israel; we take our stand with Daniel, who could in his youth keep sober in the midst of a drunken court, and as a consequence could look a lion out of countenance in his old age. The Christian has fellowship with such heroes as the three Hebrew princes who dared the king's furnace rather than worship his image. Esther, the heroine of her age, and Ruth, the sweet embodiment of womanly devotion and fidelity, become our sisters. Elijah and Elisha are fellow-citizens with us. David and Isaiah and Malachi, and Paul and Peter and John, and all the long line of prophets and apostles and singers of the faith are in the goodly company of our holy brotherhood.

If we come down to our own day, it becomes more apparent still that the best company in the world is to be found among those who have come into fellowship with Jesus Christ. A heart and life built on Jesus as its foundation is introduced into the communion of the noblest spirits that the world knows. A few years ago, when Dr. Talmage visited Mr. Gladstone, who has but recently

passed so triumphantly beyond, he asked him if the passage of the years confirmed or weakened his faith in Christianity. The two men were walking together on a hillside when the question was put. The greatest of modern Englishmen, and the greatest citizen of the world for a generation, halted at the question, and looking his visitor in the eyes with earnestness and solemnity replied: "Dr. Talmage, my only hope for the world is in the bringing of the human mind into contact with the divine revelation. Nearly all the men at the top in our country are believers in the Christian religion. The four leading physicians of England are devout Christian men. I have been forty-seven years in the Cabinet of my country, and during those times I have been associated with sixty of the chief intellects of the century, and I can think of but five of the sixty who were not professors of the Christian religion, and those five were all respecters of it. Talk about the questions of the day! There is only one question, and that is how to apply the gospel to all circumstances and conditions. It can, and will, correct all that is wrong. I am, after a long and busy life, more than ever confirmed in my faith in Christianity."

There is something very striking in the way in which Paul sets forth the truth that Jesus Christ is not only the foundation of our hope, and of all nobility of life, but of the prophets and the apostles also. He was the burden of their message and the center of their hope as he is of ours. We have here the order in which we come to God: we find the prophets in the Bible, and they bring us to Christ, and Christ brings us to the mercy seat — to the heart of our Heavenly Father. Jesus Christ is the foundation-stone of our love for the Bible. As we come to love him we love his words and the whole book which tells about him and makes clear his message to humanity. There was a certain literary woman who stood high among book critics. One day, in reviewing a book, she said: "Who wrote this book? It is beautifully written, very nice, but there is something wrong here and there!" She proceeded to criticise it with a good deal of severity. Some months afterwards this lady became acquainted with the author of the book, fell in love with him, and married him. She took the same book up again, and said: "What a beautiful book! What a nice book! There are some mistakes here and there, but they ought to be overlooked." The book was

just the same as it had been before, but the critic had changed. When she began to love the author it changed her attitude toward the book. So it is with us about the Bible. People do not love the Bible because they do not love Christ. But you never yet heard of a man or woman who came to love Christ sincerely to whom the Bible did not become precious.

Christ is the foundation motive of all that is noblest and sweetest in men's conduct toward each other. A very beautiful illustration of this is seen in the hearty letter of commendation received from the Roman Catholic priest who was chaplain of the wrecked battle-ship *Maine* concerning the character of Carlton Jencks, one of the seamen who went down to death in the waters of Havana harbor. He was a member of the Christian Endeavor Society, but his love for Christ made him seek to help the Roman Catholic sailors on the ship, and help the priest of that faith in building up what was best in their hearts and lives. After the explosion the priest wrote home to the dead sailor's friends: "He was one of our best men, and, although not of my belief, was one of my greatest comforts. He was a zealous promoter of the evening

services on the ship." The religion of this disciple of Jesus Christ made him seek to be a helpful Christian brother among these men whose faith was different from his own. He helped to get his messmates together when the chaplain was waiting to give them religious instruction. So sincere and genuine was he in this that the priest says: "Our men admired him for his attention to religious duties." In every land and every clime where Christianity has gone it has had that kind of effect on the hearts of those who have really built upon Jesus Christ as the corner-stone of their living.

After one of England's wars in Africa was over, Lord Napier, being about to leave Africa, found he had a soldier with a broken leg, and did not know what to do with him. He was too sick to take along with them, and he did not like to leave him among barbarians. So he said: "Fetch him along anyhow; better have him die on the way than leave him among these savages." They took him part of the way, but the poor man became so very ill they could not take him any farther. So Lord Napier went to a woman who had caught some little glimpse of the divine life and was distinguished on account of it for her kind-

ness, and said to her: "We have with us a soldier with a broken leg, and we must leave him. Will you take care of him?" and he offered her ten times as much money as could have been expected, hoping by excess of pay to secure for him great kindness. And what do you suppose she said to him? She said: "No! I will not take care of this sick soldier for the money you offer me. I have no need of the money. My father and mother have a comfortable tent, and I have a good tent, and why should I take the money? I will not take care of the soldier for the money, but if you will leave him here I will take care of him for the sake of the love of God!" That is the supreme motive of the most splendid deeds that are being done on the earth to-day. Men are bearing heavy burdens with cheerful hearts, and delicate women are going into attics and cellars of city slums seeking out the sick and the poor, the broken-hearted and the sinful, with faces aglow with the light of heaven — not for money, for ten thousand deeds are done every day that no money could hire — for the sake of the love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ is the corner-stone of our confidence and trust in God. It is only when we

stand upon Christ as the solid rock under our feet that God changes from the Monarch and the Ruler before whom we tremble, and comes to be the tender, loving Heart to whom we may say in trustful confidence, "Our Father who art in heaven." St. Luke tells us that when those first seventy disciples were sent out to preach, and had come back with the wonderful story of the divine blessing that had attended their mission, the heart of Jesus was filled with joy as he listened to them, and he cried out aloud in his thanksgiving to God: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Mark Guy Pearse, commenting on this utterance of Christ, says that while none of us can touch the sky, all of us can touch the ground, and remarks on the blessedness of the fact that the highest things of God and the greatest good of life do not require men of genius and vast ability, but are put within the reach of the lowly and the lowest. The life of God in the soul is like the light of the sun that bathes the hill-tops with glory, but also creeps down into the valley and fills the buttercup with gold up to the brim, and unfolds the daintiness of the daisy.

In these days when so much is made of the intellect it is blessed to know that the great mysteries of life are those which we mastered as little children. None of us ever went to school to learn the art of eating and drinking, of breathing and sleeping, and yet if we had not learned these we could not have learned anything else. Mr. Pearse says he likes to think of some old German professor sitting down amid his dusty volumes in the sacred stillness of his study, to master the English language. How he is perplexed with the lawlessness of our pronunciation! He does not know how to put his tongue to his teeth to get off many of those difficult words. At last he thinks he knows enough to visit England, and reaches the shores of that land. He speaks what he thinks is English, though the people who hear him think it is German. But into his presence there trips some bright-faced little girl of five or six years. She has no trouble with this language of ours. She knows how to put her tongue to her teeth; she can prattle away without a moment's hesitation. Why? She has not learned it with a grammar and a dictionary; it is her mother tongue. She lay as a little one in her mother's arms, and looked into her mother's face, and

watched her mother's lips, and listened to her mother's voice, and learned to talk. Alas! there are a great many people who are trying to find God with a grammar and a dictionary! But a man can never learn to say "Our Father who art in heaven" in that way. It is in the arms of the shepherd Christ, who brings us back again to the spirit of childhood, that we learn to say those blessed words of affection and confidence.

Christ is the corner-stone of the only thoroughly well-rounded and complete human life. Man was made in the image of God, and though he wanders far away, and is awfully marred and scarred by sin, we are many times astonished at the sudden flashes of nobler life in him which tell of his divine lineage. But all such flashes are evanescent and transient except when rising upon the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. He alone has power to transform the nature and bring a man's entire being into submission to the heavenly life. Many who build upon frail foundations may do occasionally beautiful deeds, but they relapse again into the quicksands of sin. Only Christ can keep a human life ever strong and steady like the lighthouse flame that streams forth from above a foundation built into the solid rock.

In a hotel parlor in New Orleans, recently, a number of ladies and gentlemen were engaged in conversation. Suddenly a very repulsive-looking man came into the parlor. He had a disagreeable and forbidding face and manner. His countenance bore the marks of dissipation and degradation, and his eyes were bleared. He was ugly both in person and movement, and when he took a chair the conversation ceased, and there was an unpleasant constraint as if an evil spirit were present. The ugly man remained seated, with his head bowed down, frowning at space. Little by little the conversation began to revive, but attention never completely left the ugly man. Suddenly he arose from his chair. Every eye was glancing furtively after him as he walked nonchalantly to the piano and opened it. There was a death-like silence. "Who asked for music?" was the involuntary thought, but no one had the courage to speak to the intruder. He ran his fingers carelessly over the keys and his ugliness disappeared. From a demon he was become an angel. He seemed to be playing to please his own fancy, wandering without effort from one theme into another. The listeners were charmed; tears came to the eyes of the ladies. The music

was telling of life: its joys and sorrows; of deep woods with the sun in lace-work on the ground, and birds singing in the trees; of moonlight in the far-away, dreamy places; of recollections of departed friends, and the sadness of disappointment. How could such a delicate, soaring spirit, moved by the mystical expression of harmony, be lodged in that coarse, degraded body? The ugly man, charming his listeners so that they were enraptured with him, was like Caliban, the vicious, destructive demon, who dreamed of the music on his island: "The isle is full of noises, sounds, and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not." The playing ceased abruptly; the player turned on his stool and gave a harsh, guttural laugh. He was the ugly man again. The angel had disappeared, and the demon was again in power.

Thank God, Jesus Christ has the power to take hold upon a nature that has been made ugly by sin and wicked ways, and transform it by his divine grace into his own beautiful likeness. He can take the ugliness away, with all that is forbidding and repulsive. Many a face that has borne its inheritance of unattractive features has been so lighted up with love, and patience, and gentleness, and

compassion that it has become beautiful as an angel's. Christ is the one being who has power to expel the demon from the human soul, and bring the angel into constant dominion. If I speak to any who are conscious of ugliness of nature, manifested in marks of jealousy and envy, or hate, or greed, that wrinkle and distort the soul, I preach to you as the foundation of your hope the divine Christ who is able to transform your nature and make it beautiful. He will bring you into fellowship with himself. He will live with you day by day, and living with him you shall catch his spirit, and after a while, when you shall awake to immortality, your heart shall glow with gladness and delight, in that land where you shall know as you are known, to see that your once ugly and distorted moral features have been transformed into his likeness, and you have come to share the beauty of your Lord.

CHRIST CLEANSING THE TEMPLE OF THE SOUL.

"He went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves." — *Luke* xix. 45, 46.

The temple in Jerusalem is not alone in having been invaded by thieves. The temple of the human soul, which belongs to God, and in which he should ever dwell, is often made a rendezvous for thievish lusts and passions which ravage that holy sanctuary of all that is most noble. Sometimes we contrast two men — the one strong and pure, surrounded by an atmosphere of benevolence and mercy, his conversation and life giving utterance and expression to a mind and heart full of reverent thoughts toward God and sympathetic and helpful interest in humanity; while the other is drunken and degraded, surrounded

by an atmosphere of profanity and vulgarity, his conversation and life expressing the most reckless and defiant spirit toward God, and a selfish and vengeful attitude toward his fellows. The two men seem as far apart as heaven from hell; it seems scarcely possible that they can belong to the same order of beings. Yet they are brothers, and the one great difference between the two is that the temple of the soul in the one case has retained its true character as a temple unto the Lord, while in the other case evil appetites and passions and unholy imaginations have ravaged the temple and hold it as a place of revel. Between these two characters which stand out in such startling opposition are many others where the contrast is not so striking, where the class to which they belong is not so easy to designate. It behooves those of us who are Christians to interrogate our own hearts very frequently and see if they are indeed the temples of the Holy Spirit. To be a genuine Christian requires that Christ shall dwell in the temple of the heart, and that the supreme motive of the life shall be to serve him and please him.

Mr. Spurgeon said that in his young ministry he received a tremendous spiritual uplift

which was felt through all his later life by a strange revelation which came to him in a dream. He was sitting in an arm-chair, wearied with his work. He had fallen asleep in a very self-complacent sort of mood, as his work at the time was unusually successful. As he slept he thought a stranger entered the room, and though his face was benign, he carried suspended about his person measures and chemical agents and implements, which gave him a very strange appearance. The stranger came toward him, and extending his hand, said: "How is your zeal?"

Mr. Spurgeon supposed when he began his question that the query was to be for his health, but was pleased to hear his final word; for he was quite well pleased with his zeal, and doubted not that the stranger would smile when he should know its proportions. Instantly he conceived of it as physical quantity, and putting his hand into his bosom brought it forth and presented it to the stranger for inspection. He took it and placed it in his scales, weighing it carefully. Mr. Spurgeon heard him say: "One hundred pounds!" He could scarcely suppress an audible note of satisfaction; but he caught the visitor's earnest look as he noted down

the weight, and he saw at once that the man with the scales had drawn no final conclusions, but was intent on pushing his investigation. He broke the mass to atoms, put it into his crucible and put the crucible into the fire. When the mass was thoroughly fused he took it out and set it down to cool. It congealed in cooling and when turned out on the hearth exhibited a series of layers which, at the touch of the hammer, fell apart, and were severely tested and weighed, the stranger making notes as the process went on. When he had finished he presented the notes to Mr. Spurgeon, and gave him a look of mingled sorrow and compassion as, without a word except "May God save you!" he left the room. The astonished Spurgeon opened the notes and read as follows: "Analysis of the zeal of a candidate for a crown of glory — weight in mass, 100 pounds. Of this, on analysis, there proved to be: Bigotry, 10 parts; personal ambition, 23 parts; love of praise, 19 parts; pride of denomination, 15 parts; pride of talent, 14 parts; love of authority, 12 parts; love to God, 4 parts; love to man, 3 parts. Total, 100."

Of all the hundred parts, according to this analysis, only seven parts, comprising love to

God and love to man, were pure zeal. Mr. Spurgeon said that he had become troubled at the peculiar manner of the stranger, and especially at his parting look and words; but when he looked at the figures his heart sank as lead within him. He made a mental effort to dispute the correctness of the record. But he was suddenly startled into a more honest mood by an audible sigh — almost a groan — from the stranger, who had paused in the hall, and by a sudden darkness falling upon him, by which the record became at once obscured and nearly illegible. He fell upon his knees and cried out: "Lord, save me!" As he knelt there the paper with its terrible analysis became a mirror, and he saw his heart reflected in it. The record was true! He saw it; he felt it; he confessed it; he deplored it, and besought God to save him from himself with many tears, until at length, with a loud and irrepressible cry of anguish, he awoke. He had prayed in years gone by to be saved from hell, but his vow to be saved from himself was now immeasurably more fervent and distressful; nor did he rest or pause till the refining fire came down and went through his heart, searching, probing, melting, burning, filling all its chambers with light, and hallowing

his whole heart to God. He declared ever afterwards that that day was the crisis in his history.

Let us search our hearts and see if there be any false motives or wicked way in us. Let us pray God to reveal the inmost recesses of the heart's temple to our gaze that we may be sure that our whole souls are surrendered to him. It is better to be weighed in the balance and be found wanting now, while yet transforming grace and cleansing power may be found at the mercy seat, than to be weighed in the balances of the judgment-day and be found wanting then when it is too late to change. There are no heart thieves so powerful that Christ cannot drive them out and transform the temple into a fit dwelling-place for the Divine Presence.

There is a spot in southern Idaho, a few miles below the Great Shoshone Falls, which until recently was called the "Devil's Corral." For thousands of years this "Devil's Corral" had lain a silent, ghostly, hollow, and unfruitful desert, surrounded by giant lava walls towering above almost perpendicularly from five to eight hundred feet. These lava walls, burnt, rent, torn and twisted into confusing shapelessness, shut in an apparently irrecov-

erable desolation. Even the Indian passed around it when fishing along Snake River; and the more daring white man looked at it, gave it its ugly name, and made money out of other white men by bringing them to see it. One day a young man of ideas went down into the strange place, and saw that it might be reclaimed. He saw how the rock wall might be turned to good account, and he said: "The north wind can never find its way down here. This place ought to be transformed into a garden or a fruit-farm." He discovered in the highest part two small cold-water lakes which were connected. From these the entire basin might be irrigated. He also discovered several hundred acres of very choice soil. Against the undertaking was the tremendous work necessary to clear and level and irrigate the land. He homesteaded a part of the land, made a desert entry on the balance, and began. He blazed out a trail along the rocky descent, down which pack-mules could travel. Wagons, harrows, plows, and all sorts of things that pack-animals could not carry, were lowered with ropes over a perpendicular lava wall of six hundred feet. After a while he engineered a road, which he blasted out with dynamite from the rock walls. Now, a four-horse team

can be taken down into what once was the "Devil's Corral," and it has been transformed into four hundred acres of paradise, blooming into life with five thousand fruit-trees. The luscious fruit is a continual joy and fortune to its owner, and a source of pleasure to visiting thousands. That is an illustration of the transformation which Jesus Christ can bring to a human heart and life. He can take a poor sin-possessed heart that has been only a devil's corral, yielding nothing that is good, and transform it into a blossoming paradise where all the sweet graces of the Spirit yield their fragrance and their fruit.

The serious questions pertinent for every one to ask at this moment are: What is the condition of the temple of my own heart? What would Jesus do if he were to visit it? Are the thoughts and meditations and purposes which live in my heart pleasing to Christ? If these questions can truthfully be answered only in the negative then there can be no question about your duty at this time. On your knees before the mercy seat you should implore him who drove out the swindling money-changers from the old temple in Jerusalem to visit your heart and drive out every unholy guest.

Jesus can never come into the temple of your soul and drive out the evil guests that are despoiling you, except by your invitation. Even a little child has the absolute power of choice and may keep Christ out of his heart, if he so wills. We cannot throw off this personal responsibility for our own conduct.

In the midst of the civil war, when there had been a meeting of the governors of the Northern States which had passed resolutions declaring that there ought to be a more aggressive campaign, a congressman from Rhode Island, Mr. Dixon, was appointed to represent their wishes to the President. This gentleman went to the White House one evening to deliver himself of his mission.

Mr. Lincoln listened without interruption to what Mr. Dixon had to say. When he was through, the President said to him: "Dixon, you are a good fellow, and I have always had a high opinion of you. It is needless for me to add that what comes from those who sent you here is authoritative. The governors of the Northern States are the North. What they decide must be carried out. Still, in justice to myself, you must remember that Abraham Lincoln is the President of the United States. Anything that the President

of the United States does, right or wrong, will be the act of Abraham Lincoln, and Abraham Lincoln will by the people be held responsible for the President's action. But I have a proposition to make to you. Go home and think the matter over. Come to me to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, and I will promise to do anything that you by then have determined upon as the right and proper thing to do. Good night."

Mr. Dixon left the White House feeling highly gratified by the honor that had been put upon him. He soon dismissed this pleasant thought, however, and began seriously consulting with himself as to what should be done when the responsibility fell on him to decide the policy of the President of the United States. Many suggestions occurred to him, but one after another each was dismissed as for some reason out of the question. When the morning light broke he had not determined upon his course, upon the policy which he was to impose upon the President. He decided he would not go to the White House that morning. He did not go the next day, nor the next.

Indeed, three weeks went by before he saw the President. Then it was at a reception at

Secretary Seward's, and Mr. Dixon tried to get by in the crowd without attracting special attention. But the long arm of the President shot out, his hand grasped Dixon's and drew him one side.

"By the way, Dixon," said Mr. Lincoln, "I believe I had an appointment with you one morning about three weeks ago."

Mr. Dixon said he did recall a mention of something of the sort.

"Where have you been all these weeks?" asked the President.

"Here in Washington," said Mr. Dixon; "but to tell the truth, Mr. President, I have decided never to keep that appointment."

"I thought you would not when I made it for you," was Mr. Lincoln's comment.

And it is just as hard, just as impossible, for you to put off the responsibility of your own conduct as it was for Abraham Lincoln. You are the keeper of the temple of your own soul, and although Christ will come to the door and knock, he will never come in unless you open the door and invite him. Will you not do that this very hour?

CHRIST AS THE GARDENER.

"She turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."—*John* xx. 14–16.

In the days immediately after the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples in many forms. And that is what he is always doing to men and women in our own time. He appears in a different form to every one of us. To some he comes as he came to the disciples in the storm at night, when they thought he was a spirit and cried out with fright. There are many people to whom Christ now appears to be only a ghost to haunt them on the stormy voyage of life. If they would but listen to him, however, they would hear him

saying as of old, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." To some Christ comes as a deliverer. Their sense of bondage to sin is so keen that the supreme cry of their hearts is for some one strong enough to unlock the prison doors and spring back the great iron bolts that hold fast the dungeon walls of their prison. To such Christ comes as the liberator to set them free, and they ever think of him as a heroic Saviour. Others there are, whose souls have long been hungry and starved for hope and sympathy and love, to whom Christ comes as does the harvest after an Indian famine, with abundance of bread. Jesus to them is the bread of life; they feed upon the bread sent down from heaven. Still others, like Paul, are smitten down by the light at noonday; by the glory of that Light which is greater than the brightness of the sun, and ever after, looking backward to the old days of blindness and darkness, Christ seems to them to be the light-bringer. Christ comes to many in childhood with the tenderness of a shepherd who carries the lambs in his bosom. A little boy who had been accustomed to seeing every day in his play-room a picture of the Good Shepherd carrying a little lamb in his arms was confronted with

the picture of the Madonna and her Child. He looked up into my face and asked, "Is that the Good Shepherd when he was a baby?" There are many to whom Christ comes as naturally as that, and who are led on through all the days of childhood by his gentle spirit, who never know what it is to stray away from the Shepherd's side. There ought to be many more than there are of that class. I doubt if Christianity, or rather the Christian church, is acting with so little wisdom at any other point as it is in relation to children. Our children should be consecrated to Christ in infancy and be given over to his care and training with never a thought of a period for the sowing of wild oats which must be uprooted again in penitence and sorrow. Isaiah says, "Peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near," and if we do our full duty by childhood the overwhelming majority of our children reared in Christian homes will be kept ever near to the side of the Shepherd Christ.

But I wish especially to call your attention to the form in which Christ appeared to Mary at the sepulcher. Joseph's tomb, where Christ had been buried, was in the midst of a garden; and when Mary turned about and saw Jesus

clothed in the ordinary garb of a gardener she thought he was the gardener. What purpose Christ had in thus appearing to her we do not know, and yet we surely do not in any way distort Scripture meaning by studying this figure as representing Christ's cultivation of our hearts. Christ is the gardener of every soul that yields to him. In one of his parables he especially sets himself forth as a gardener. He tells the story of a certain man who had a fig-tree in his vineyard; and this man came and sought fruit year after year, but the tree was always barren and fruitless. So there came a day when he said to the gardener, "I have been coming every year now for three years to taste the figs on this tree and have never found any. Cut it down; why should it be left to cumber the ground?" But the gardener had sympathy for the tree and pleaded for it. He begged the owner of the vineyard to let it alone for another year and during that year he would fertilize the soil, and dig carefully about the roots of the tree, and if it bear fruit, well and good; but if it still remained barren after that, it should be cut down. I think we can take that parable as illustrating Christ's gardening in human hearts.

There is a sense in which we are all trees in

God's vineyard. Some of us are barren trees, yielding no fruit; but as the barren tree in the vineyard drinks in the sunshine and the summer dew and the spring showers the same as the trees that are full of fruit, so God sends his rain upon the just and the unjust, and the sinful man receives the blessings of God, giving opportunity and privilege for every good thing to come into his life, the same as does the righteous. Not one of us is so poor and barren in moral and spiritual inheritance but that it is possible for us to bear fruit unto God if we yield ourselves completely to the Heavenly Gardener.

It is the glory of the skillful gardener that he is able to make common plants develop into forms of beauty and usefulness that the ignorant gardener would never dream of producing. In the great gardens scientific men are every year producing new combinations in roses and carnations and many other flowers. I remember last year a certain Eastern florist paid many thousands of dollars for the exclusive privilege of growing in America a new carnation which had been developed in England. It is the glory of great artists in every department of life that they are able to bring much out of little; that they can give value

and splendor to common things. Dr. W. L. Watkinson says that on visiting an art-gallery recently he noticed that some of the greatest pictures had not a splendid thing in them. The ordinary artist when he wants to be effective paints in a breadth of golden harvest, or he portrays a kingfisher or some other iridescent bird, or a tree in bloom, or that captivating thing, a rainbow. But you will notice that some of the greatest painters that ever lived never touch these things. They take common things — a railway cut, a plowed field; no conspicuous object; only the black earth, the brown earth, the red earth; but their touch is a supreme touch, so that you can see the blossom in the dust, and the rainbow in the cloud; and the picture, although it contains not a brilliant thing, is bathed in imagination, poetry and beauty. So Christ can take the most common human plants in his garden and develop them into the most indescribable beauty and interest.

Just think of some of the human plants that grew in Christ's garden when he was here on earth — a man who had a whole legion of devils; and Mary Magdalene, who had seven; and fretful and peevish Martha; an old beggar, Bartimæus, blind since he was born;

Zacchæus, the tax-collector; a handful of fishermen without education or standing. Jesus picked up people like that, and how they blossomed under his hands! They have grown into the heart of the world for eighteen hundred years, and the sweet fragrance of their Christian graces bless humanity in every land.

What Christ did with these people he can do with us. In soul-gardening it is possible for the gardener to impart his own nature to the sensitive human plant under his care. It is said that among the Dutch the rose is sometimes cultivated by planting a rose of ordinary variety close to a rose of unusual beauty and fragrance. The common rose is carefully watched and its anthers removed so as to avoid its propagating its own species; the object being that it shall be pollenized by the superior rose. Gradually the rose thus treated takes upon itself the characteristics of the nobler and sweeter life of its neighbor. This is a striking illustration of what happens when we permit ourselves to be planted in the garden of Jesus. Our lives receive the gracious influences of his own divine spirit. We become like him. We lose the characteristics of the lower life to which we have been accus-

tomed, and begin to show the indications of the nobler and sweeter life of him who is the Rose of Sharon. How can any intelligent man or woman refuse to yield the heart to this Divine Gardener?

I do not doubt that some of you are greatly discouraged by your own lives. You have had much higher ideals for yourself than you have ever realized. You have meant to live a much nobler life, and to perform deeds of rarer value, than any that have ever been put down to your credit. But you have never yielded your heart to the care of him who is able to make out of your life something far better than the things you have hoped for but failed to accomplish. If you have tried in your own strength and are not satisfied with your success, why not give your life over into Christ's hands? A young man who was converted a few months ago told me recently that when I had long pleaded with him to come to Christ, and seemed ready to give up in discouragement, the thing that started him was my final sentence, "It cannot do you any harm, anyhow." And so I say to you, it cannot, by any possibility, do you any harm to obey Jesus Christ, and yield yourself to be led by his hand. This young man says now that

it not only did him no harm, but has been of more good to him than anything that has ever come into his life. You will say the same if you surrender your life to the training of Jesus.

There is something very touching in the parable of the unfruitful fig-tree, where Christ pictures himself as interceding in behalf of the unfruitful soul. How many years has God been coming to your life seeking in vain for the fruit of thought and conversation and conduct which he had a right to expect. Instead, perhaps, there has been bitter fruit, fruit that could do no one any good, and it may be has done much harm. Bring this home to your own heart, and think of that barren tree as yourself. Hear God saying: "Cut down the unfruitful tree. Cut down this useless life. I have been coming year after year to this man, or this woman, seeking for fruit and finding none. Cut them down. Why should they cumber the ground?" And then hear Jesus as he pleads for you: "Let him alone one year more; let me fertilize the soil with the preaching of the gospel, and the invitation of Christian neighbors, and the rebukes of conscience, and the whispered pleading of the Holy Spirit; perhaps he will turn

and repent, and all will be well; but if he does not, then shall he be cut down." When that last year's limit is made, none of us can tell. You may be in that period now. Possibly it is already drawing near to a close. It is a solemn thought. But, thank God, the probation has not yet ended, and this very hour you may by the divine grace and the forgiving mercy of Christ be transformed in your inmost nature so that you will begin to bear fruit unto righteousness.

THE COIN OF THE HEART.

"Whose is this image and superscription?" — *Matt.* xxii. 20.

The enemies of Jesus were deep in plans and plots to get him into trouble with the Roman government. They had concocted a scheme which they thought was sure to succeed, whatever course he should pursue. They would ask him whether it would be right to pay tribute to Cæsar. They reasoned that if he said "No," the Roman authorities would have him arrested as a traitor and disturber of the peace; while if he said "Yes," he would become unpopular with the people, who despised the Roman government. But these plotters were caught in their own trap. Christ at once perceived the malice of their purpose and said to them: "Show me the tribute-money." Upon this they brought him a penny and he, taking it in his hand, inquired:

"Whose is this image and superscription?" On their replying that it was Cæsar's, he answered: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's." When they heard that they went away biting their lips.

The thought I wish to present is the simple fact that the heart of man belongs to God. Man is, so to speak, God's coin. As Queen Victoria appears in her image on the coins of Great Britain, so God's image is on the human heart. No race has been found so lost in heathenism but that some trace of God's superscription and image is found in it. Over the trails into the Klondike thousands of men, good and bad, are tramping, but nothing more splendid will ever happen there than the act of an Indian mother who, caught in the first winter storm on the mountain pass, stripped herself almost to the skin while she kept her babe warm and safe. She was discovered kneeling in the snow with the unharmed babe in her arms. It is not hard to trace in that child of the forest the superscription of him of whom it is said that he will comfort his people as a mother comforteth her child.

The church needs to keep this great fact

ever before its eyes. We must never lose out of our hearts the living, vital knowledge of the truth that all men belong to God. However sinful they now are, however defaced the image of God may be, down in the human heart there lies the divine coin that is worth saving, and which may be saved by devotion and by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

A remarkably interesting experiment in gold-mining is being successfully worked in the Snake River in Idaho. It has long been known that enormous quantities of fine gold are washed down the creeks and rivers from the great gold-yielding mountains of the Northwest and lost in the gravel-bars and mud-flats of the larger streams. Now and then a gravel-bar has been worked with success, but nothing has been done on a large scale. An enterprising man has now conceived and built a number of boats fitted to work backward and forward across the stream, with an immense suction-pipe worked by steam, the nose of which is kept to the gravel-bar in the bed of the river, which sucks up the sand and gravel, or anything else within its reach. All this material is delivered into a sluice on board the boat. The coarse stones are carried by an endless chain over the side of the boat

into the water again, and the gold-bearing sand is carried over burlap tables, and finally over copper plates, where the gold is amalgamated and saved.

The Christian church may learn a lesson from this experiment in mining. Innumerable particles of human gold have been swept away by rapid currents of evil from the home veins of settled and successful life. This drift-gold, which in our American cities comes not only from our own farms and villages but from the homes of every nation under heaven, we have been altogether too ready to give over as hopeless of salvation. All we need is the devotion and consecration and faith that was evinced by the disciples at Pentecost, and this human drift-gold shall be amalgamated and saved. God is as willing now as then to give the Holy Spirit in the same mighty power. We need to feel to the very core of our hearts that every man we meet, no matter how defiled by sin, is, after all, one of God's coins and has in his heart somewhere that which answers to the message of the gospel.

Seeing that our hearts are God's coins, we ought to give him the complete possession of them for this divine service. The great work

that tells most is that in which the whole heart is thrown. Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, the author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," in telling how she came to write those famous lines that sent a thrill of inspiration through all loyal hearts, says that her heart was filled with yearning to do something for her country. She could not fight, and could not leave her family to go as a nurse. This thought continued to oppress her, and before long the conviction possessed her mind that she should write a war-song. It seemed a spirit within her striving for freedom. She retired one night with this subject uppermost in her thoughts and awoke in the night to find the verses had almost written themselves. "I wrote 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic,'" said Mrs. Howe, "because I could not help it." Great things happen in the salvation of souls wherever there are men and women who serve God and who carry the good news of Jesus Christ and his salvation in that spirit. There is a joyous inspiration, an ecstasy of gladness, about such whole-hearted service which is irresistible. John Burroughs says that the most interesting feature of bird-songs is the wing-song, or song of ecstasy. It seems to spring from some more intense excitement and self-abandonment than

the ordinary songs delivered from the perch. When the bird's joy reaches the point of rapture it is literally carried off its feet, and up it goes into the air, pouring out its songs as a rocket pours its sparks. We ought to learn a lesson from the skylarks and bobolinks and vesper-sparrows. You may rest assured the gospel will never sound so sweet on a sinner's ear as when he hears it from the lips of a Christian who yields himself up completely as a coin in the hand of God and pours his whole heart into a delightful service of love. When men and women serve God in that way they are like old violins — they constantly get sweeter. Expert violinists tell us that the tones of all violins become mellower with age and use. When new, they have a certain thickness or woodiness of tone, which, in most of them, degenerates into an actual harshness. Where this woodiness is very marked, the violin seems to the player himself to have a very powerful tone, but to the listener stationed at a little distance the tone may sound very weak. Many human hearts are so given over to worldliness that even though they bear the name of Christian the tone is worldly, and gives out little of the attractive music of the skies; but if we yield

ourselves to be completely used by Christ, as the years go on our hearts will become mellow and sweet with the spirit of our Lord.

But I am sure there must be some message here for those of you who are not Christians. Some of you are allowing the image of God in your heart to be covered over by sin. This coin which belongs to God is being used by the evil one. You are losing the richest treasure of life in your pursuit of treasures that will soon perish. Last summer a man took a band of sheep to Alaska expecting to sell his mutton to the miners at Dawson City. He drove the sheep in over the Dawson trail. Some time before the mining city was reached, cold weather came on, and he decided to kill his sheep. He killed and sold three hundred and received nearly twenty thousand dollars for them. Then he concluded to hold what he had left for a better market. He killed the remaining four hundred in a secluded place off the line of travel, and suspended the carcasses on poles far enough above the ground to be out of reach of bears, wolves, or other wild animals. He left two young men to watch the mutton and started out prospecting for gold. His stay was so prolonged that the young men determined to pay a visit to Daw-

son, which they imagined to be only a few miles away. It proved to be one hundred miles to Dawson, and when the owner of the sheep returned to inspect his wealth, he found four hundred bleaching skeletons. The eagles, ravens, crows, kites, hawks, and other birds of prey throughout all that region, had gathered together and feasted on his mutton until it was all gone. Alas! there are many who lose far more valuable treasures in the same way. Men think the treasures of the soul can wait while they go prospecting for all manner of earthly good. Many a father and mother neglect the spiritual training of their children while they are little, thinking that it is more important to get rich, or to make a success of earthly life, and expecting after a while to win them all to Christ; but they awaken when it is too late to find out that while they have been bent on worldliness the devil's birds of prey have plucked from their children's hearts that which was most valuable.

No man can afford to let his spiritual nature wait on anything. Whatever else a man may lose, he cannot afford to lose there. Other losses are only temporary, but that loss is eternal. What matters it if a man gains the whole world and then loses his own soul?

One Sunday evening an earnest pastor spoke to a bright and attractive girl and, urging that delay might be dangerous, pleaded with her to accept Christ then. But the words were vain. As the pastor turned away with a heavy heart, the girl hastily wrote in her song-book the fatal words, "I'll risk it." A few months later the minister was called in haste to speak if he could a word of comfort to this same young woman, who had been suddenly smitten down with illness and had been given up to die. Again the pastor pleaded for a changed heart, but with a look of despair in her eyes the dying girl replied: "It cannot be; my heart is cold, dead. When you spoke to me months ago I was moved, but I stifled the nobler impulse, and as you left wrote in a book the words, 'I'll risk it.' And the Spirit left me." And she died in despair. I beg of you not to take that awful risk. The interests at stake are too great, and the loss is too irretrievable. Give Christ your heart here and now!

THE BEAUTY OF SERVICE.

"My soul is weary of my life." — *Job* x. 1.
"For to me to live is Christ." — *Phil.* i. 21.

This first text sounds like the wail of a lost soul. The second is a shout of victory. They represent two extremes of human living. They are both common experiences in human life. Many of us have known each of them, at different times in our experience. One of the saddest things one meets in this human procession which never ceases to throng about us, is the many people who have lost hope; for whom all enthusiasm and attractive charm of life have died out. With some it died hard, like the dying nerve in a tooth; but the lifeless eye, the languid step, and the hopeless conversation tell the sad tale of a soul that has wearied of its existence.

The increasing number of people who, under such circumstances, wickedly put an end to

their own existence is an alarming feature of our own times. Only this week, in a neighboring street, a young wife, yet in the flower of her girlhood, destroyed by her own hand the beautiful creation of womanhood which God had committed to her. The reason seems to have been that she had wearied of life and it had lost its charm. Hope and love disappearing, there was left an aching void which nothing else could fill and the pain of which she could not endure.

While the temptation to suicide is probably not common to any of you who hear me, yet I am sure that all will bear witness that there is no harder burden to carry than the mere monotony of existence, when life has lost its attractiveness. It is what the French call *ennui.* It is the most trying disease and the most incurable, from a worldly standpoint, that afflicts humanity. Colton says: "Ennui has made more gamblers than avarice, more drunkards than thirst, and more suicides than despair." The strongest minds have suffered most keenly from this affliction. Aristotle, the mightiest of merely human philosophers, suffered untold agony from what we commonly call the "blues," and finally so wearied of his existence that he died the death of

a suicide. Bismarck, the greatest German statesman for a hundred years, and one of the greatest in the world's history, suffered from the same cause. The fact is that it is impossible that a worldly life, no matter how intellectual, or how high the scale on which it is lived, or how wide the reach of its power, or how rich the treasures of wealth at its disposal, should fail to pall on the palate of an immortal being. Men high and low, rich and poor, have come at last to cry out with Solomon, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

It is well for us to lay the emphasis on the truth that not only is a sinful life disappointing, but that however harmless it may seem to be, a merely worldly and selfish life must in the end prove to be only ashes to the man who leads it. Struggle, physical, intellectual and spiritual, is necessary to real human interest. It is said that of all fascinating places under the sun the island of Tahiti, one of the Society Islands, takes the lead. In that country — a little earth lost in a vast ocean — nature has done everything which could be done in a physical way to make indolent souls happy. The climate is temperate and equable all the year round; the vegetation is luxuriant and the nights full of perfume and mystical

light. The influence of this dreamy, lazy life is very insidious. It is not necessary to work, as the island furnishes food without the labor of tillage. Many Americans and French, having gone there for a visit, have become so enraptured with the languorous existence that, like the visitors to Lotus Land, they lie down and forget friends, home, ambition, and everything. It is, however, the languor of stupefaction and death. One never heard of any great soul emerging to any worthy purpose or deed out of such an existence. The barren sands of Cape Cod with its thin soil and harsh climate are a thousand times more likely to develop men and women into worthy beings than such an Eden-like paradise.

It is a comfort to turn away from this aspect of life, the temptation to which we have all known, and listen to Paul's triumphant exclamation, "For to me to live is Christ." Life was constantly interesting to Paul because it was unselfish. Selfishness had died out in his heart. Had he been wrapped up in himself, thinking of his own disappointments and defeats, and figuring constantly on the outlook for his own future in this world, he would certainly have had a most monotonous and weary time. But Paul had consecrated his

life to Jesus Christ. His scars were the "marks of the Lord Jesus." His chains were the badge of the fact that he was the "prisoner of Jesus Christ." Wherever he was, he was standing in Christ's stead as Christ's minister, as Christ's man, to show forth his Lord and proclaim his message. As Christ was in the world to minister to its needs, so Paul was in the world to share the Christ-life. It was impossible that such a life should grow monotonous or dull. Paul obtained his happiness and joy through this supreme devotion to Christ. If Paul had been seeking for happiness it is hard to think of a place in his whole ministry where he could have found it. The storm at sea, the shipwreck, the island fire where the viper fastened on his hand, the Ephesian amphitheater where he fought with wild beasts, Lystra where he was mobbed and stoned, Philippi where he was thrust into the stocks, Rome where he was the prisoner of Nero — surely none of these were hopeful places in which to seek after happiness, and if this had been Paul's purpose in life he would have come to old age one of the most miserable of men.

Happiness is one of the most elusive things in the world. The people who seek it never

find it. The men and women who live that they may be happy, and are always planning and scheming with that end in view, never know what really pure happiness is. Happiness comes to people, if it comes at all, as the reward of service. It comes because of what a man is and what he is doing. Paul and Silas, for instance, were very happy in the dungeon at midnight. They had been whipped until their backs were sore, they were physically hungry and tired, but they were full of joy as the servants of Christ, and their songs and triumphant spirit led to the conversion of the jailer and his family. Happiness will come to us when we live in the same spirit. It was infinite joy to Paul to lift men and women upward out of their sins and their littleness into the great spirit in which he lived, and into the higher and holier manhood which he had come to know in Jesus Christ. The degradation of the heathen world preyed upon him and became the haunting man of Macedonia to him because the possibilities of manhood which he had come to know in Christ Jesus seemed so high and so precious. The beauty and joy of service cannot be fully known to us unless we have given ourselves to Christ in the same way and see in the splendor of

Christ's character the manhood which is possible to the most degraded of our fellow-beings.

In a Western town, not long ago, a crowd had gathered before a large glass window fronting on the street. They were attracted by a magnificent white-headed eagle which was held a prisoner inside the window. There was a chain from its right foot to a huge piece of iron, some water in a pan, an untouched piece of fish, a few sods, and a large card with the words, "For Sale." The big bird's wings drooped to its feet on either side; its eyes were glazed and dim; it opened and shut them now and then, but never once turned them to the jostling, noisy crowd that stood just outside the glass. There were no marks of violence to be seen, but the dull pathetic eyes, the drooping wings, the soiled white about the head, and the ruffled feathers over the body showed that the captive had been in chains much longer than it had been in the window. Suddenly a young mountaineer who had just come to town pushed his way to the front and for a long time looked silently at the great helpless bird. He was sure he had seen it before. It had been captured, he learned from what some of the

crowd said, in the country from which he had come. That settled it; it was the same bird. He had seen it on the mountain where he sometimes had hunted for a stray sheep. He knew the big pine in the top of which it had its nest. He had noted it soar majestically about him as he worked in the valley, and he had seen it sit motionless for hours on the top of some tall, distant crag. The mountaineer elbowed his way along the window to the door of the store and went in.

"What d'ye want for that bird?" he said.

"I'd like to buy him."

"Two dollars," was the reply.

"Very well; I'll take him."

He paid over the money, and the bird was handed out to him. The crowd at the window watched eagerly as the mountaineer came out with the big eagle under his arm, and went straight across the street to where a ladder leaned against a bill-board that was some ten or twelve feet high. At the foot of the ladder he stopped and took the chain from the bird's leg; then he went slowly up and placed his old friend on the top of the bill-board and came down.

The great bird seemed for a time to have forgotten how to be free. It sat stupidly

as it had in the window. But gradually it came to itself. It lifted first one drooping wing and tucked it closely to its side, then the other. It raised itself slowly to its full height, and stretched out its great head toward the sky. The dullness went out of the eyes, and a fierce new light flashed in. Then, nervously stretching out its huge pinions on either side and taking a step forward, it rose with a hoarse scream and swept out toward the sun.

A burst of applause from the crowd met the mountaineer as he recrossed the street. He simply said: "I had seen him on the mountain, and I couldn't bear to see him there."

So a man who has seen humanity glorified in Jesus Christ, who has seen it on the mountain-top in the noble life of Jesus, and has come into fellowship with that life, can never again see humanity in chains, held down by wicked habits, degraded by impure and vulgar living, without a deep longing to give back again its wings, and its freedom, and the mountain air of holiness to which it belongs. About such service there is a joy infinitely more precious than can come from any lowly source. It is the joy of the life of Christ. The more thoroughly we throw ourselves into

that life the more complete will be our joy. We shall thus come to understand what Christ meant when he said to his disciples that he would leave his joy with them and no man would be able to take it away from them.

Let us seek to know the joy of Christ, to enter into the beauty and the gladness of service. Often when we have been giving ourselves up to work for the church and to service in Christ's kingdom, we have been tempted to yield before criticism or other difficulty and imagine that we would be happier to give it all up and live our own self-indulgent life, seeking only our personal good. All such temptations are from the evil one. The only truly happy people in this world, the people who have an abiding joy, are those who are able to say with Paul: "For to me to live is Christ."

People who live lives like Frances Willard, and Lord Shaftesbury, and Clara Barton, who enter into the fellowship of suffering with Christ's poor and burdened and tempted brothers and sisters, rise up also to the mountain-top of beauty and joy that the world cannot give and cannot take away.

JESUS AT MATTHEW'S DINNER.

"He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—*Luke* v., 27–32.

HERE is a man who got a new name by coming to Christ. His old name was Levi, which signifies a link; but when he followed Christ and became an apostle his name was changed to Matthew, which means "the gift of God." Matthew was a cousin of Jesus Christ. His father was Cleopas, and his mother a sister of Mary, the mother of Christ. Jesus had known him all his life. Matthew

was a stray sheep in the family. He was the skeleton in the household closet of Cleopas. There was not anything that he could have done to hurt and shame his family more than to become a tax-collector of the hated Roman government. How it ever came about we do not know. Perhaps he fell into bad company, and, the family being poor, determined to make money at any cost. At any rate we are sure that his father and mother never thought of him without great pain, and it was, no doubt, the one theme about which the neighbors never spoke to them.

Knowing what we do about the character of Jesus, we are not surprised that he should seek to bring this wanderer back to the family flock, or to learn that one day he determined to make a special effort to save Matthew. He walked straight down to the place where Matthew was busy collecting taxes from fishermen and traders. We do not know what he said except that the great burden of his theme was that Matthew should follow him; but there was such a charm about his words that they took hold of Matthew's heart, and without waiting to think the matter over further, he got right up from his desk, or money-changing table, and followed Christ.

We may learn from this that Christ does not give a man up because he is a hard case. We give people up altogether too easy. Because a man is worldly, and given over to money-getting or sinful pleasure, is no sign that he is happy in such a course. Many a man so situated thinks nobody cares for his soul. Possibly Matthew was having that sort of a feeling the day Jesus came along and so lovingly entreated him to become one of his disciples. If we take Christ with us we need not be afraid to go to any one and urge him to forsake his sins.

Doubtless Christ found it much easier to persuade Matthew to come back again to a righteous life because of his memory of a good father and mother. He had not forgotten the prayers that he had heard offered up at the fireside. I wish we could have more open and earnest expression of family religion than we do. Mr. William Shaw, the treasurer of the Christian Endeavor Society, fell into a conversation with a gentleman in the writing-room of a city hotel, who told him this story: For many years he had been a nominal Christian, but never took any active part in church work. He had one child, a sturdy boy a little past three years old.

They had no family prayer; but his wife, who was an earnest Christian woman, always had the little boy say his prayers before he went to bed. Frequently, after his prayer was finished, the little boy would look up into his mother's face and say, "Mamma, why doesn't papa pray?" The wife often told the husband about it, and urged him to have family prayers, but he was indifferent to her request. One Sunday evening their pastor's sermon contained a message for this man, and he went home from the service, took down the Bible, and said, "Wife, we'll have family prayers to-night."

The boy was all attention as he read the chapter, and when they knelt while he offered a brief and broken prayer. Then the little fellow climbed up into his father's lap, put his arms around his neck, and said as he kissed him, "I'se so glad papa prayed." When his mother put him to bed that night, he kept repeating over and over, "I'se so glad papa prayed."

The next day the father went to his work, and in the middle of the forenoon he was called home. While his mother was in the back part of the house, the child had climbed up on the open fire-grate to get something off

the mantel. His little dress caught fire, and he ran screaming into the front yard. Before any one could get to him his clothes were all burned off and he was unconscious and lived but a short time.

The father said that as he looked at the little body from which the spirit had gone to the Saviour of the little ones, his sweetest comfort was the words, "I'se so glad papa prayed." "I would not take all the wealth of the world," said the father, "in exchange for the memory of those last words of my boy, 'I'se so glad papa prayed.'"

There is nothing parents can do for their children that will be so great a comfort to their heart in the future, or so rich a treasure for the children themselves, as to set before them the example of a genuine and faithful Christian life. A boy who has had a home like that finds it easy to believe that God's heart has the tenderness of the old home feeling for him, even though he has wandered far into sin.

An observer watching the sailing of the steamship *Australia* from San Francisco for the Klondike, the other day, specially noted two interesting farewells. One strapping young fellow wrung the hand of an old man of mili-

tary bearing. "Well, Jack," the father said, "I wish you all kinds of good luck, and, my boy, whatever you do, don't drink!" A moment later, with a gulp in his throat, he said: "Good-bye. I can't stand about here or I will lose my courage and beg you to stay." And with another handshake he was gone. Another young man was given Godspeed by his old father, and the parent's voice broke as he said: "Now, George, you know there is always a good home to come to if you don't strike anything. Don't stay up there and suffer because of any false pride. If you can't get a fortune this season come back. You will have as good a show here as many others, and you can always count on a good home!" Now I can imagine that one of those boys would be touched in a tender place when he read in his Bible, "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

Matthew did the very best thing possible when he made his discipleship as open and public as he could. The next thing we hear about him is that he has made a public dinner for Christ and invited in his acquaintances. He sent out invitations to publicans and sinners who would be most likely to profit by coming into close personal touch with Jesus.

He made this dinner in his own house and invited his old friends to come and meet Christ there. If Matthew had any fear that he might be drawn back into his old associations he couldn't have done a shrewder thing to defeat the devil than to make this dinner for Christ. If any of you who have recently become Christians have old associates that would tempt you away from Jesus, you may learn a lesson from Matthew. It is never safe to go to their feasts of worldliness, but it is all right to bring them to the church to your feast with Jesus. I am sure that dinner was a great success. It is probable that many years afterwards, when the men that were young then—as most of them were, no doubt, for both Matthew and Jesus were young—came to be old, they talked about that dinner as one of the greatest events in their lives.

The charm of Christ's personal conversation must have been marvelous. Men lost their devils and their diseases and turned away from their sins as they talked with Jesus. There was a fragrance about his life that was indescribably sweet; and the best thing about it all is that he is coming to some of you now, and saying to you in your inmost conscience, "Follow me." If you will only answer that

call as Matthew did, and rise up and follow him, he will come into your heart, and into your home, and fill them with sweetness and blessing.

One of the most interesting curiosities in Germany is the rose-tree at Hildesheim, which is more than a thousand years old. Its existence can be traced back to the time of Charlemagne, and it is a fact that it was mentioned as a curiosity in old chronicles of the ninth century. It twines around a large part of the ancient Cathedral of Hildesheim near Brunswick, and with its countless blossoms presents in the season an entrancing spectacle. This venerable witness from bygone ages has been attacked by some insidious insect that threatens it with destruction. The Hildesheimers, to whom the roses are a sacred heirloom, have summoned the best authorities in arboriculture to their aid, but the fate of their tree fills them with anxiety. There is a rose-tree older than that, and ten thousand times more wonderful and beautiful. It is the Rose of Sharon, which has sent its roots under the sea into every land, and is sending forth its blossoms to gladden the hearts of all peoples. It has been often attacked by secret foes, but was never so fruitful as now. Its fragrance makes

many a home represented here glad with rejoicing. No heart here is so barren, so like a desert, that the Rose of Sharon will not grow in it if planted there with penitence and faith.

There is something infinitely hopeful and precious for us in Christ's response to the scribes and Pharisees when they criticised him for eating with publicans and sinners. He told them frankly that he was a physician, and, as such, naturally ministered to the sick. His mission to the world is to save sinners, and the fact that you need him, and need him very badly, is the surest guarantee that he will accept you — just as a physician will go quickest to the man who is nearest to death. Suppose two men come to the doctor, and one says, "My boy has only cut his finger, and is not very badly off, and doesn't need you very much"; but the other says, "My boy has a dangerous wound, and we fear his life-blood is ebbing away, and he may not live till we reach him." The doctor will go with the latter messenger and let the other wait. So when you tell me you are a poor sinner, past all help in your own strength, I tell you that Christ waits with greatest tenderness and skill to come to you the moment you invite him with all your heart.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are

heavy laden," are the words of Jesus. Mr. Moody recently said that he had been racking his brain trying to find out how to explain to people that word "Come." But he had made up his mind that the best definition of "Come" is just "Come." We were all taught to come before we could speak or remember.

A woman once came to him and said: "Mr. Moody, I would like to become a Christian; but I'm so hard-hearted."

He replied: "My good woman, did the Master say: 'You soft-hearted people, come'? Nothing of the kind. He said: 'Come unto me'—all black hearts, vile hearts, corrupt hearts, deceitful hearts—'all.' If your heart is hard, who will soften it? You can't. The harder the heart the more need of coming. Isn't that so? The harder, the viler, the more deceitful the heart, the more need there is for the Saviour; so come along and get rest. If you can't come as a saint, come as a sinner; if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk, creep to him; but come."

I am sure some of you ought to do that. Christ is saying to you as he did to Matthew, "Follow me"; happy, indeed, will it be for you if, looking back after years have passed away, you are able to say with him, "I rose immediately, and left all, and followed him."

THE THREE GOOD CHEERS OF JESUS

"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."—*Matt.* ix. 2.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."—*Matt.* xiv. 27.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—*John* xvi. 33.

Some years ago I read a book entitled "In the Cheering Up Business." That is the business of Christianity in this world. No one ever put into three years of life so much good cheer as did Jesus during those three years of his earthly ministry when he "went about doing good" among the hills and valleys of Palestine. The world is full of lonely, burdened, homesick hearts that need more than anything else a word of good cheer. Christianity could never fulfill its claim of being the gospel for the whole world if it did not have in it this

dominant element of good cheer. The Christian religion is one that wipes away tears, that inspires hope, and nerves its disciples with courage. To me there is something very significant in the three occasions in the story of the life of Jesus in which he used this happy phrase, "Be of good cheer."

The first of these is the good cheer of *forgiveness.* A sick man had been brought to Christ by four friends who carried him there by main strength. From the conversation connected with his healing it would seem quite probable that the man's sickness was directly caused by his sins. There would be nothing uncommon about that, because sin is very often the cause of disease. There are doubtless those who hear me who are suffering, even now, physical pain and inconvenience caused by sins long since repented. As a turbulent, overswollen stream pours its muddy waters out into the lowlands in flood-time, and leaves many a swamp and slough to grow stagnant and be a breeding-place for reptiles long after the soiled torrent has buried itself in the sea; so many a time a man has the aching body, and the shattered nerve, and the deadly thirst of appetite which is an echo of a sin long ago committed. But Jesus Christ

both healed the man and forgave him his sins. Probably he had been sick a long time and had grown discouraged about himself; no doubt the feeling that his affliction had been brought upon himself by his own sins had made keener his sense of hopelessness and despair. Nobody could ever read human nature like Christ, and he saw the deep sorrow of the man and had pity on him, and with an infinite hopefulness in look and tone that went like a flash from a galvanic battery to the very core of the man's being, he said: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

Notice how tender and generous and great-hearted is the forgiveness of Christ. Paul says in the twelfth chapter of Romans that we should always show mercy "with cheerfulness," and in doing so we only follow the example of Jesus. Study any one of the instances where Christ forgave sins, and I am sure the cheerfulness and hopefulness in which he performed the deed will impress you more than anything else. Take the case of the poor woman who had been taken in adultery. Christ does not berate her and send her away feeling that she was the offscouring of the earth, and that it made little difference whether she were good or bad; but he opened

a sweet and happy and hopeful future to her as he said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Take the case of the other woman, who came to the house of Simon, and in her penitence and love broke the alabaster box of ointment above his head, and washed his feet with her tears. Christ not only forgave her sins with gentleness, but what a world of good cheer he opened up to her thought when he declared that the story of her kindness and her ministry to him should be remembered and told to the end of the world. And the poor demon-possessed man who was found in the tombs of Gadara — when Christ met him and cast out the devils that had been his tormentors, he wanted to go with the Lord, but Jesus said: "Go home and tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Poor fellow! he had been such a victim of his sin that he had forgotten that he had a home; but the good cheer of Christ's outlook for him made its sweetness a glorious reality once again.

Christ has not lost his cheerfulness in dealing with sinners. Sin discourages always. Sin makes a man believe that he is too bad to be saved; that it is too late to mend; that whatever it may be to others, the Christian

life is impossible to him. But Jesus is ready to say to you, if you will only turn to him in faith, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

The second good cheer is connected with trouble and danger. It was the night when the disciples were out on the lake in the storm. They did not know that Jesus was anywhere near, but he was watching close at hand, and in the hour of their danger he appeared for their relief, calling out to them, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Christ has not deserted his world, but is still watching over his disciples, ready to help when they need and save them from shipwreck. There is an organization in New York city called the "Don't Worry Society," but our Lord intends the Christian church to be that society in every community. If we trust Christ absolutely we must, in the very nature of things, be saved from worry. In the darkest storm we know that he is not far off, and will not desert us or allow us to sink. Our greatest blunder and sin is to suppose that we can be saved from dark hours by mere circumstances, or by the ministrations which money or any earthly power or influence can give us. It is the great things, the

spiritual realities that center in Christ, which alone can give us the support and good cheer that we need in the great emergencies and storms of life. As Dr. Ames has well said, at such a time *trust* gives strength. When a man really believes that invisible and gracious powers attend his life, no burden is too heavy for him to carry. Then it is that *hope* gives strength. We turn on our trouble and say: "I shall soon leave all this behind. I shall outlive my trial; and, in time, I shall even forget it." When a man attacks his trouble like that, courage springs anew: the beggar's pack of sad memories and weakening fears drops off, and he takes up the real burden with a song. In such hours *love* gives strength. We can do for others many things which we cannot do for ourselves, and inspired by love we forget to be tired. Christ brings all these forces with him when he hails our hearts in time of storm. The consciousness of his presence assures us of the genuineness and integrity of our own inner self. We are always strong when we know we are right. As Tennyson makes Sir Galahad say:

> "My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure."

There is no voice so full of good cheer as that of Christ if we have once given our heart's affection to him. It is no longer the voice of a great teacher, or a philosopher, or some historic character; but the voice of our Saviour, with a music in it full of heavenly love, which can touch the fountain of thanksgiving and happy tears quicker than any other voice. The message of the voice depends upon its effects on the soul of the man to whom it comes. One will hear a strain of music and be entirely indifferent, while another is roused to the highest enthusiasm by the same sound. John Burroughs, the naturalist, relates that some years ago a friend in England sent him a score of skylarks in a cage. He gave them their liberty in a field near where he lived. They drifted away, and he never heard or saw them again. But one Sunday a Scotchman from a neighboring city called upon him, and declared with visible excitement that on his way along the road he had heard a skylark. He was not dreaming; he knew it was a skylark, though he had not heard one since he had left the banks of the "bonnie Doon" a quarter of a century or more before. The song had meant infinitely more to the old Scotchman than it could have

meant to Mr. Burroughs. Many years ago some skylarks were liberated on Long Island, and they became established there and may now occasionally be heard in certain localities. One summer day a lover of birds made a journey out from New York city to observe them. A lark was soaring and singing in the sky above him. An Irishman came along and suddenly stopped as if transfixed to the spot. A look of mingled delight and incredulity came into his face. Was he indeed hearing the bird of his youth? He took off his hat, turned his face skyward, and with eyes streaming with tears stood a long time regarding the bird. "Ah," thought the ornithologist, "if I could only hear that song with his ears!" To the scientific man it was only one bird-song out of scores of others with which he critically compared it; but to the other man it was like a message from heaven. It brought back his youth and all those long-gone days on his native hills. So a man who has never given his heart to Christ and known him as his Saviour and personal Friend may read the promises of Jesus in a cold-blooded, philosophical spirit; but to the sincere Christian, to whom Christ is the nearest and dearest friend, these "good cheers" spoken in times

of discouragement and despair come as a message from heaven itself.

When Nansen went into the frozen arctic sea he took with him, among other things, a phonograph. Into this his wife had sung her sweetest songs, and the prattling voice of his little babe had uttered its childish tones. In the loneliness of the arctic midnight he could again listen to the familiar tones of those who were dearest to him. In the most discouraging hour he had the good cheer of loving voices to beckon him onward to success. These stories of the life of Jesus are a phonograph into which Christ has spoken. When our boat is rocked by the waves and the night grows dark, if we will listen we can hear Christ saying to us, as to the frightened disciples long ago, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

The last good cheer Jesus uttered was in one of the closing conversations with his disciples, when they were very lonely and sad. The world seemed so large and they were so small; it was so strong and they were so weak. But Christ said to them: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He assures them of his own triumph over the

world, and that in the same faith and spirit they, too, shall conquer. Christ came and lived in the midst of this world as a workingman, as an earnest reformer, as a brotherly helper, throwing himself into the thick of the fight, never dodging contact with anybody because of his poverty or sickness or sinfulness, and yet came off conqueror over the world. The world with all its wickedness could not soil his purity, or break down his courage. Let no man hesitate to become a Christian for fear that the world will slay him, for in Christ's strength the weakest may conquer. Did you never see an opal that seemed lusterless, without life or special beauty? But shut your hand about it and let it lie for a moment in your warm palm; it is all changed; there is not even a needle's point of its surface that does not glow with the beauty and splendor of the rainbow. The reason is that the opal is a sympathetic jewel and needs contact with the human hand to bring out its richest beauty; so you need, in order to bring out the nobility and strength of your character, and the beauty and grace of soul which are possible to you, to come into close touch and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Only in that magnetic atmosphere can you

come to the manhood or the womanhood which God sees is possible for you. A little over a year ago, in New York city, I was with an old Sandy Hook pilot, a great, weather-beaten, bronzed man of the sea, the hero of a hundred storms, when by the grace of God he emerged from darkness to light and was happily converted to Christ. I saw him every day for a few days afterwards, and then on a Friday night he came to me and said: "It's my turn to go out to-morrow to the sea to meet a ship coming in, but I never went with so light a heart. I've been going out past Sandy Hook for nearly fifty years, but to-morrow will be the first time that the Great Pilot has gone with me, holding the wheel of my heart"; and the tears of joy ran down the old man's weather-beaten face as he said, "It will be the happiest going to sea I have ever known."

I bring you the "good cheer" of the Saviour. Wherever you may be — in sin, or sorrow, or weakness; or if, indeed, they all gather about you with lowering clouds — I bring you this trinity of hopeful messages, with the Saviour's love, and beg that you make of them a threefold cable to draw you out of the darkness, and the doubt, up to the solid rock of perfect confidence in Christ.

CHRIST WITH THE WILD BEASTS.

"The spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts."—*Mark* i. 12, 13.

THE great work of the world which has tended to cure the savagery of mankind, and lift the race upward, has been done by Spirit-driven souls—men like John the Baptist, who, whether in the desert or in the palace of Herod, preached the gospel; men who, like Philip, turn from the city where they are popular, their name on every lip, and go unhesitatingly to strange fields and climb into any passing chariot toward which the Spirit drives them; men like John Howard, who, forsaking home and ease and luxury, went from land to land, from prison to prison, into dungeon cell and fever-fetid hole, driven of the Spirit to find out the worst of man's inhumanity in order to make protest for the weak and for-

gotten; women like Dorothea Dix, who took up the cause of the insane when there was not a humane asylum for that afflicted class on the earth, and became a wanderer on the face of the globe in their behalf, driven of the Spirit to agitation until humanity should provide better things for the unfortunate; women like Florence Nightingale, whom the Spirit drove from England to the Crimea to care for the sick and wounded soldiers; women like Clara Barton, driven of the Spirit into Armenia when the terror of the Turk kept back all others, that she might carry food and comfort to the outraged and helpless Christians, and later to Cuba, going from hut to hut as the messenger of mercy and of Christ. Oh, for sensitive hearts — sensitive enough to be Spirit-driven to the work which lies all about us waiting for willing and skillful hands!

But the theme to which I wish specially to call your attention is suggested in the strange statement that Christ was "with the wild beasts." I confess to you I do not know what it means. The whole statement is full of mystery, and one man's guess is as good as another's. Just what is meant to be taught I cannot say, and yet this weird declaration

necessarily gives added emphasis to the great fact of Christ's perfecting himself through suffering to be the Captain of our salvation. Just how much Christ suffered of loneliness and conflict in those dark days in the wilderness with the wild beasts we do not know; but we know all that is necessary for us to know about it, and the knowledge is fraught with encouragement—that however terrible was that lonely conflict with Satan and the wild beasts, Christ was more than a match for them all and came off victorious.

This theme, it seems to me, is very simple and plain and full of teaching—Christ is in this world to destroy all that is vicious and wicked; indeed, to destroy the works of the devil.

The wild beast of war that stalks abroad to-day and roars like a lion seeking its prey, Christ shall yet slay. There shall come a time when ravenous war will cease to threaten, when men shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. How the old world will blossom then! It makes one's heart ache in Germany, and other countries abroad, to see in many fields the harvesting all done by women and children; and when you ask the reason why,

they tell you the men are in the army, and that, too, in time of peace. Ah! war is a bloody beast; let it die.

The brutal prize-fight and the brutalizing, soul-destroying liquor saloon and gambling hell shall go down and be slain like wild beasts as Christ advances into dominion. God give us the faith of our holy religion to dare to believe that if a thing is sinful and wicked and man-killing it must perish out of the world which Christ ransomed! The awful folly of our land and our time is that we compromise with these giant sins and license wild beasts to raven. It costs the State of Montana nearly half a million dollars a year in bounties for their destruction to keep the wolves from increasing in numbers. Now if that State should license a farmer in every community to breed wolves to add to the number which prey upon its flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, it would only be guilty of the same sort of folly of which the State of Ohio, as well as Montana, is guilty in licensing men in every community to sell intoxicants that prey like wild beasts upon the homes of the people.

A friend of mine went into the Bowery Mission in New York city one evening, and had

his attention drawn to a man near by who was leaning forward to catch every word of what was said. A refined, intelligent, gentlemanly face was concealed behind a patch of mud and clots of blood. His clothes were torn and covered with dirt from the gutter. He did not accept the invitation to remain at the close of the service, but was hastening toward the door when my friend took him by the arm and pulled him back. He said to the stranger, "My friend, you are in trouble, and I came here to-night hoping I might be helpful to some man who is in trouble." Startled at being held, the man wheeled about and faced the one who had spoken to him. Two bruises were on his head, and the blood from a cut on his chin was dripping down upon what was otherwise a clean shirt and collar. "Yes," said he, "I am in great trouble, I assure you. This morning I left the hospital and I am still very weak. I have had but three drinks, and I have fifteen cents left to get some more, and then God only knows what will happen." But the Christian man was not to be put off. He took him to a wash-basin, and saw the dirt and blood removed from as refined a face as he had ever seen. The promise of coffee and food in the restaurant below, with a clean bed

above, touched the man's heart and brought out his story. He was a college graduate, a member of a well-known family, and had been a professional man of distinction. He had gone from honor and influence down to the gutter because he had been caught and thrown by the wild beasts that were licensed to ravage in his city. God help us to join with Christ in fighting these wild beasts, till they are overthrown!

The Christian church and the liquor saloons in these cities live altogether too peaceably. I saw the other day that through some strange freak a saloon-keeper had put up in his saloon window one of the announcements of a lecture to be given by me in a neighboring church. Perhaps he did it as a joke, but it stirred me to the bottom of my heart, and I wondered if I had been doing my whole duty in fighting the liquor saloons of this city. God knows I do not desire to be any more popular with a liquor-seller in this town than Jesus Christ would be if he were the pastor of this church. There can be no peace between the church and these vile institutions that does not mean dishonor to the church. Whenever the Christian church is doing its duty the saloon will hate and abuse and slander it,

and do everything that it can against it. Did you ever go through the wild-beast section of a zoölogical garden as the hour for feeding the animals drew near, and hear the lion roar, the wolf howl, the hyena gnash his teeth, and the serpent hiss? So whenever political party or church or minister really starves the wild beasts of wickedness, you hear wicked men and cowardly dupes roar and snarl and hiss. We ought to rejoice when we hear that, for it means that we are on Christian ground and are loyal to our Lord. If we are faithful to him, victory will come in his own good time.

Let us bring our message closer home, and reflect that every heart that has not surrendered itself to the will of Christ is a cage of wild beasts. Shakespeare makes one of his characters say of another: "I think he be transformed into a beast; for I can nowhere find him like a man." Another exclaims: "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!" And still another bitterly says of himself that he is a "hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness," and a "lion in prey." Christ called Herod an "old fox." Each of us has in our own nature the factors of our ruin; but Christ does not tremble be-

fore the wild beasts of the human heart: he has met and vanquished them in many a soul.

If we could look into each other's hearts to-night, we would be astonished to see how necessary it is that Christ should deal with these wild beasts. Some of you have that same tiger thirst for strong drink about which I have already spoken in a general way. How like a tiger it is! You have often seen the phrase "a man-eating tiger." It arises from the fact that when a tiger has once tasted human blood he is never satisfied with any other food. He will prey on other things to keep from starving, but he lurks about the villages and watches the lonely paths where men straggle, that he may slake his thirst again on human blood. The thirst for strong drink is like that. A man who has that thirst in him, no matter how he came by it, is no match for it in his own strength. One of the saddest funerals I ever attended was that of a young man to whose funeral I was called just before coming to this church. He was a son in one of the best homes in my congregation, a college man and a splendidly educated physician. He had been sent to Germany to finish his professional studies. He was a bright, brainy fellow, who might

have stood at the very head of his profession. But he toyed with the wine-cup and the beer-glass until the tiger-like thirst was on his track. His father picked him up out of the wreckage three or four times, and would start him in again in a new city, where he always won immediate success; but it was only temporary, for there was a man-eating tiger in his own breast. Finally, when he ought to have been in his prime, he came home to die, a despairing, hopeless wreck.

While no man can fight that wild beast successfully in his own strength, Christ is more than a match for it. There are men in this congregation who were once torn and scarred by this awful foe. They sought to contend against it in their own strength and failed, but when they came to Christ, and invoked his aid, they found one strong and mighty to deliver. To-night they are living sober and happy lives because Christ is bringing them off more than conqueror.

Others there are who are ravaged by the lion of lust. How many it has slain! In his godly youth, while yet the atmosphere of his pure home was about him, and ere he had fallen into sin, Samson met a young lion and rent it in twain as though it had been a kid;

but there came a day when Samson, fallen away from his prayerful and pure life, was slain by the lion of lust. This lion ravages in these cities, and many go down before him. Beware of this temptation, as you would shun the path where a vicious, hungry lion lay in ambush. Beware of those thoughts, and associates, and books, and papers, that inflame the imagination with false pictures of sinful pleasure, and gloss sin over until your innocent youth and your pure home seem dull and commonplace. Many a time a youth dallies with forbidden pleasures, thinking only to toy with them, and not to fall into open sin. That is only a delusion of the devil. Tens of thousands have yielded to that insidious temptation and have awakened afterwards to the awful fact that the slime of hell itself had besmirched their souls. Many a youth as innocent and pure as a child has unconsciously been led down the winding stairway until the moral nature became leprous and depraved. But Jesus Christ is more than a match even for the lion of lust. He alone has power to transform the heart, to cleanse the secret chambers of the imagination, to fill the temple of the soul with pure thoughts, and strengthen you for every good purpose.

Then there is that wolf-like temper which is likely to flare out at any time until you are torn in shame and disgrace. Perhaps there is no sin that men excuse in themselves so easily as the sin of uncontrolled anger. A man congratulates himself that he is a good man—only "I am hot-tempered." Many a murderer has been that kind of a good man. No man is safe for a moment who does not seek from Christ the divine power to aid in the control of his own spirit. Christ can tame the wolf-like temper and domesticate it, and train it to do the bidding of the will, so that it will no longer be a wolf to ravage but a watch-dog to stand sentinel.

Then there is the hyena of greed. This snarling beast often drives out all others, and so keeps the whole kennel to itself that a man congratulates himself that he is better than others, and can hardly be counted a sinner at all, because he has no temptation to drink, or to lust, or vicious anger. But don't congratulate yourself, for the hyena of selfishness and greed is enough to destroy any soul. It slew Ananias, it made a suicide of Judas, and it will just as surely strangle you unless by the aid of Jesus Christ you strangle it.

In other hearts there is heard the hissing

serpent of falsehood. Untruthfulness honeycombs a character and eats out all its strength. One of the most tragic things about politics and business and social circles to-day, as perhaps it has been in every day, is the prevalence of insincerity and untruthfulness. A man deceives and is untrue in politics, and yet imagines that somehow he is an honorable man. A business man will sometimes admit that he is not straightforward and square in business transactions, and yet is deluded into thinking that he is an honest man and a gentleman in spite of it. A minister urging upon a man not long since the necessity of his conversion, received this answer: "It is true that I sometimes shark a man in a trade, but I'm all right in my heart." How utterly self-deceived the man was! Perhaps some of you are being deceived the same way. Your nature is sympathetic, and you mistake pity for piety. Because you can be touched by a tender story you think yourself a Christian, in spite of the fact that your honesty in any place where you can deceive is not to be counted on. You will take advantage of a man in dealing with him, and yet you comfort yourself that your intentions are pure. You ought to put to yourself the rough

and rugged, but true, imagery of Spurgeon when he said that "a man might as well walk into a horse-pond and hope to keep dry, as to turn his face toward hell and hope to get to heaven." That untruthfulness and insincerity will poison your whole life and banish you from the presence of God forever unless the serpent of falsehood is killed and your nature brought to health and genuineness. Christ is able to do that for you. He is more than a match for the hissing serpent of insincerity. In him you may find your soul's lost manhood.

Shall we not have an honest heart-searching here and now? Nothing is more foolish than self-deception. No man who covers his sins shall prosper. Accept the offer of Christ to come now into your heart and destroy every wild beast and make your soul the temple of the Holy Spirit.

CHRIST THE SOUL'S MASTER.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—*Acts* ix. 6.
"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."—*John* ii. 5.

CHRIST is the soul's rightful master. The way of peace is the path of surrender to the will of Christ. Many are like Paul, stubborn and self-willed, and come to the day of surrender through a hard path; and many others there are who, unlike Paul, refuse to yield in the face of light as bright and convincing as that which shone upon him on the way to Damascus. They know their duty, they see that Christ is Lord, but taking the bits between their teeth, like some reckless, runaway steed, they dash recklessly on to eternal disaster. Happy is the soul that, seeing the danger, heeds it!

There is in southern France the old town of Avignon, where there is a strange ruin of a bridge which was built in the twelfth cen-

tury, but has long since been abandoned. The old bridge spans the River Rhone, which is very wide at Avignon. That is, it seems to span it, but does not quite do so. Only four arches remain to-day of the nineteen that once existed, fifteen of them having been swept away by a terrible flood. These four arches only take the road from the eastern bank to about a quarter of the breadth of the river, and there leave it. At one time there was a little chapel in the middle of the bridge which was said to contain the relics of one of the saints, and the wayfarer was asked to halt to get the blessing of this saint; but about a hundred years ago that part of the bridge was swept away, and there is a legend that the devil came in place of the saint to lure his victims to death. In the disguise of a benevolent monk he would join himself as a guide to strangers arriving in the town, and at night would take them to this broken bridge in order to lead them to the other side of the river, going before them in the darkness to show them the way. At the end of the bridge he would be seen still advancing, while the trusting strangers, following on, would step over the broken edge and plunge with a wild cry into the dark river below. In this

manner he led many victims to destruction, and the broken bridge of Avignon got an evil name from the number of such tragic accidents that happened on it, until at last the authorities made it altogether inaccessible to the public.

The evil one has many broken bridges by which he lures the unwary to their destruction. I have in my thought at this moment a young man who came to the city last autumn from a home where he had been the object of everything that love and abundant means could do to hedge about and carefully prepare him for a manly career. Coming into the midst of the temptations of the city, he was drawn into the association of fast young men and flattered by those who desired to profit by his self-indulgence. The path before him seemed very pleasant. He had never associated with young men of such brilliant parts and who seemed to him to be so thoroughly men of the world. Under the spell of their flattery his mother's path of total abstinence and church-going seemed very narrow and mean. That might be all well enough for women, but it was much more manly to have his glass of wine with the fellows, and his game of cards in one of the many semi-public gambling hells

which the police wink at in this city. The road before him seemed solid. All the warnings of the Bible about the way of the transgressor being hard, and the dangers lurking in paths of self-indulgence, seemed to him but idle tales. He threw himself into this seductive way with all his heart. What was the result? In three months' time he was a drunken, soiled, bankrupt, shamefaced wreck of a youth. His mother came and took him home, though her heart was broken. Surely Solomon was right when he said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Do any congratulate themselves that, though they are not Christians, they are not tempted to the same kind of self-indulgence? But the devil has many another path besides that of the appetites and the passions by which he lures souls to their ruin. Sometimes men are led away from Christ, and brought into danger of losing their souls, through their own self-complacency. Many to-day are as proud of their self-righteousness as the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the poor publican. Yet he went down to his house condemned. It is obedience which Christ asks of us. He declares that if we love him we will

"keep his words"; that is, we will obey him and seek to please him.

Many when urged to be Christians seek to thrust aside the direct issue by pleading their morality and comparative goodness. A man will enumerate the many bad things he will not do, and urge the many good deeds which may be credited to his account; yet all the time the one thing which Christ asks of him, and without which everything else is of no avail, he refuses to do. Christ asks for the heart, for the surrender of the will to him. Only obey him in that respect and everything else will follow as a matter of course; but so long as we refuse that nothing else counts.

Every earnest pastor is often pained by the failure of many people who come very near to the kingdom and yet fail to enter in and be saved. Very probably there are those to whom I am now speaking who are at the very doorway of salvation. You have never doubted that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. You may have had doubts about many things that hang like fringes about Christianity, but the great central fact that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and that you should accept him as your Leader and your Lord, you do not doubt. Salvation

would come to your house the very hour you put this dormant faith into action by obedience to Christ.

Dr. Henry C. Mabie relates that there once came to him, in an inquiry meeting, a bright young German, in a very forlorn state religiously. He said: "Sir, I have become very skeptical. I have drifted in my religious thinking so far away that I am frightened."

"That is a good sign," replied Dr. Mabie, "for when a man is alarmed at his own thinking, there is some hope for him in the gospel. And now, what can I do for you?"

"Well, I thought you might give me some clue or other. I don't want to go any farther in the direction in which I have been going."

"Well," said the doctor, "you need not tell me anything about what you don't believe. Will you be kind enough to tell me some one thing which, after all, you do believe?"

The German thought a moment, and answered: "Well, I yet believe in God."

"Do you? Do you really?"

"Oh, yes; I believe in God. I will never give that up."

"Very well; so far, so good. Now, how much do you believe in him?"

"Why, I told you I believed in him."

"Do you believe in your God enough to act on your belief?"

"Why, a man ought to."

"Certainly," said Dr. Mabie, "or he isn't candid. Now Jesus Christ assures us if any man will act on the amount of light he has, he shall have more. I am going to call on you here and now to act on your belief. I want you to do the very simplest thing I can think of in the way of acting out your belief here and now. I want you to speak to God."

"What! do you want me to pray? I can't make a prayer."

"Well, don't call it a prayer if that frightens you. I want you to talk to God in your own way, as you talk to me, and thus prove the reality of your faith in God. God does not ask you to make my prayer, or anybody else's. You couldn't do so if you tried. Do your own praying. Have your own notion of God. You cannot have mine, anyway. No two men require to have the same amount of light, or the same convictions concerning God; but every man is required to act upon the conviction he does have; to risk himself on the truth he does avow; to treat the measure of truth he clings to as if it were actual and not a pretence."

"Well," said he, "with that explanation of it, I think I could begin."

The two men knelt down, and the young man listened while the minister prayed. When he had ceased, after a short struggle, he broke forth himself, "O my God!" and he went on step by step, pouring out a very torrent of confession, until suddenly, springing to his feet, he exclaimed: "Oh, sir, I feel wonderfully changed. Could you lend me a Bible? I want to read the Bible."

The man was gloriously converted in that first act which he put forth on the faith he had. And this is not an uncommon occurrence except in its details. Many souls are held back in a deadly lethargy when one act of self-surrender, or confession of Christ as the soul's master, would bring into their lives infinite joy.

A minister was one day calling on a lady in his parish, when her husband came in. The husband was not a professor of Christianity, and, on meeting his wife's pastor, he said: "Sir, we are very glad to see you in our home. My wife is a member of your church; I am not. Indeed, there are many things in your creed I could not accept. But, sir, I believe more than some people suppose."

"What, for example, do you believe," said the interested pastor, "more than people suppose?"

"Oh," was the reply, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher the world ever saw."

"Do you believe that?" said the minister.

"I do."

"Well, then," continued the preacher, "would you mind coming to our prayer-meeting, next Wednesday night, and saying that much?"

"What!" said he. "Think of me coming to a prayer-meeting and saying that! Would you make me a hypocrite?"

"Didn't you speak as an honest man just now when you said you believed more than some supposed? And where would be the hypocrisy in saying in public what you have said to your wife and to me?"

"Well," said the man, "that is a new way of putting it; I will think about it."

He came to the next prayer-meeting, and when occasion was offered he arose and repeated the conversation which the pastor had had with him, confessing to more faith than he supposed he had. And while he stood there talking his heart was melted, the heavenly light shone in upon him, and he was

converted! He went out of that prayer-meeting the most surprised and happiest of men.

There are many here now who would go away with untold happiness if they would only act on the faith which they have. I beg of you to use the light which God has given you. If as yet the light is not bright enough to show all the way to heaven, there is surely enough to show you the first step, which is to obey Jesus and confess before men that he is the Master and Lord of your soul.

FOR LOVE'S SAKE.

"Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us."—*Eph.* v. 2.

One of the surest evidences of the supernatural character of Christianity is the high demand which it makes upon us. The life which it sets for us is the noblest that has ever been conceived. He who is the one altogether lovely character in human history is set not only as our Ideal, but as our Model, after which we are to build our own lives. The Christian life is not one simply of duty harnessed down to service, however noble; but it is duty led by the silken leash of love, which changes burdens into wings and makes all service light. It seems strange to many people who are not Christians to hear us talk about a life of sacrifice and a life of joy and gladness in the same breath. But it is all simple enough when the spirit of this life, as

suggested in our text, is taken into consideration. The Christian life attempted in any other spirit is a mockery. It is the glow of the supernatural, the presence of the divine, the glorious self-surrender, the supreme passion of love, which gives to the Christian life a charm and a beauty that the world can know nothing of. If one undertakes to live a Christian life simply as a formality, it is dry and hard and ugly.

One of the old and magnificent ruined castles in Ireland came to an end in a strange manner. It was the ancient seat of the Castlereaghs, and was at one time one of the most princely residences in the Green Isle. Finally it fell into decay and was not inhabited. As usual under such circumstances, when the peasantry wanted to repair a road, or build a chimney, or a pig-sty, or anything of that sort, they went for the stones to the ruined castle. One day Lord Londonderry paid a visit to his Irish property. When he saw the state the castle was in, and reflected on the fact that it was so closely identified with the history of his family, and even as a ruin was one of the glories of Ireland, he determined to put an end to the encroachments that had been made on it. He sent for his agent and gave orders to have the

castle enclosed with a wall six feet high and well coped, to keep out trespassers. That being done, he went his way, and did not return to Ireland for three or four years. When he did return he was amazed to find that the old castle had completely disappeared, and in its place there was a huge wall enclosing nothing. He sent for his agent and demanded to know why his orders had not been carried out. The agent insisted that they had been. "But where is the castle?" asked the marquis. "The castle, is it? I built the wall with it, my lord! Is it for me to be going miles for materials with the finest stones in all Ireland beside me?" Lord Londonderry had his wall — but the castle, without which the wall meant nothing, had disappeared. Alas! I fear that many of us are in danger in our church life of building our devotions into walls of formality that may be very strong, very orthodox, very rich in their display and mechanical equipment; and our thought and attention becoming so set upon the forms that we lose out of them the spirit of our Christianity, the fervor of our devotion, the flaming fire of our zeal for God without which all our churches and church machinery have no significance and are as senseless as Lord Lon-

donderry's wall about a castle which had disappeared into the wall itself.

It is good for us to bring ourselves frequently into the presence of him who is our Model and our Inspiration. We are to give ourselves up to the life of love even as Christ loved us and gave himself in sacrifice for us. The world which approaches us through the senses is always so near and so noisy that it is sure to lower our standard of living unless we keep in constant touch with Christ. We need to have line upon line and precept upon precept to keep us alert and conscious of the high life to which we are called.

This life of Christian love is very unworldly in many things. For instance, love never asks the question which is on everybody's lips in this commercial age—"Will it pay?" It is enough for love that it may serve its beloved. Love surrenders itself, thinking not of return. Love exults that it can give. Sometimes we see church life conducted on the worldly plan, and about every movement in pulpit and pew the interrogation point goes up, "Will it pay?"—meaning, though it would not always be accepted in so many words, will it bring money into the church treasuries, or crowd the house with popular throngs, or attract

the rich and cultured; and not meaning, the one thing for which the church exists, and has a right to exist — the expression of loving devotion to the Christ whose name it bears by carrying the good news of his willingness and power to forgive sins to every listening soul. How different is the spirit of that love about which Christ talks to us! The father who welcomed home the prodigal never asked, when taking him back in his rags, "Will it pay?" There was no talk about putting him down in the back kitchen to a supper with the servants off the fragments left from the household table. Nothing was said about half the family living squandered and a stranded youth thrown on his hands. No; the father's love was speaking when he said: "Make ready the feast; find the best robe; bring love's most precious ring; let all the house be merry. For my lost son is found again, and he whom I mourned as dead has come back alive." Wherever that spirit possesses the soul to-day, there is the victorious life; wherever it dominates in a church, speaking from the pulpit and echoing back from the pews, the angels rejoice over sinners who are attracted to enjoy its warmth.

Love never asks, "Will the burden be

heavy?" Love is never looking for light things, easy things, to do. It always wants to carry the heaviest end of the load. Christ's yoke is easy to every one of us who have completely given ourselves up to his service, because his supreme love causes him ever to bear the heavy end of the yoke. If we live in his spirit, living with us will be very pleasant, and the world cannot help being made better and happier because we are in it. This spirit is illustrated on every side by those who have been transformed into the image of Christ through his love.

When Alexander Mackay bade farewell to his native land, in company with other young men, to carry the news of the Saviour's love into Central Africa, he said to the missionary committee, "Is it at all likely that eight Englishmen should start for Central Africa and all be alive six months after? One of us at least — it may be I — will surely fall before that. But what I want to say is this: When the news comes, do not be cast down, but send some one else immediately to take the vacant place." That is the spirit which is capturing the world for Christ. If all of us who name his name lived ever in that spirit we could very shortly bring about the final victory of Christ.

Love never asks, "Am I doing more than my share?" Love never whines about its work. Its joy is that it may go into the hard places where the need is greatest. The shepherd in Christ's story does not grumble at the darkness of the night, or the depth of the cañon, or the folly of the lost sheep. It is one of his flock that is in danger of the wolf, and, leaving the ninety and nine in the fold, he seeks patiently until he finds it; and when he finds the wanderer, he tenderly carries it on his shoulder to safety and rejoices over it. It is a thing to tell the other shepherds about; a thing to sing over. Nothing can stand in the way of a Christian who attacks duties in that spirit. A poor Swiss boy, so sickly that he was confined to his bed for years, as he could do nothing else, read everything that he could lay his hands on, and learned several languages. Being a Christian, his heart became captivated with the needs of the poor natives of Africa. He prayed for strength, and when it came he crossed the ocean and put himself under Bishop Taylor, in whom he found a kindred spirit. And so it came about that Heli Chatelain made his explorations into Africa and gave himself up to the mission of helping as best he could to bring the light of

Christ into the midst of that great darkness. He has just been writing home to some of the religious newspapers, recounting his experiences; and as we read of the difficulties — not only in the country and the climate, but, worse than forests and swamps and fevers, the horrible forms of heathenism and barbarism — we wonder how any man can keep his courage and hope under such circumstances. But instead of being cast down he says in his last letter: "God is blessing us abundantly, so that *I could sing all the time.* He alone can reform this evil society. We realize our helplessness. God can and will use us." And then this brave man closes his letter by saying, with what impressed me as a touch of pathos: "My candle is burnt out, it is late, and I must be up early, before day." As I thought how rapidly this man and others like him are burning themselves out in the Master's service, I thanked God that it was possible for us to be the candles of the Lord, and to be lighted at Heaven's fires with a passion so holy and so deathless.

Love never asks, "Who will get the credit for it?" It is glad it may do the service; willing to be only the vase covered by the flowers which it holds; willing to be only the

packing which wraps the Saviour's image; willing to be only the channel, hidden, it may be, through which may come his love, which is to ransom and redeem those who shall be jewels in his crown. If our love to Christ is supreme, it is not credit for ourselves which we desire, but credit for Christ. A man went to hear Spurgeon preach, and a friend asked him: "What do you think of him?" "Nothing," was the reply. Then, seeing the look of astonishment and sorrow on his friend's face, he said again: "No, nothing." But his eyes filled with tears of joy as he added: "All I can think of is the preacher's Saviour!" Every one of us who carry the banner of Christ should be so given up in spirit to this great love for him and for his cause that our Christ shall have the credit for illuminating and transforming our lives.

Love never faints by the way. A lady visiting on one of the fashionable streets in Chicago, last summer, was called to the door to meet a man who asked permission "to have a fit on her porch." The poor fellow felt the premonitions of his affliction, and, knowing it was bound to come, sought a convenient place for the inevitable performance. It would use up a good many porches, I fear, to furnish

convenience for all the fainting Christians. But we do not need to have these times for fainting. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

If any hear me who are not Christians, I would not close without urging upon you the truth that this life of supreme sacrifice and self-surrender, which seems so unworldly and so contrary to the wisdom of the world, is, after all, the most joyous and the only safe and sure life. Dr. F. B. Meyer recently said that we need not be afraid to trust God utterly. As we go down the long corridor of life we shall find that he has preceded us and locked many doors which we would have been glad to enter; but we may be sure that beyond these there is one which he has left unlocked. When we open that door and enter we will find ourselves face to face with a bend of the river of opportunity, broader and deeper than anything we have dared to imagine in our sunniest dreams. We may fearlessly launch forward on it, for it will conduct us to the open sea. The launching out on a life of supreme devotion to Christ is an occasion of

heavenly joy and promise. When a vessel is launched by the Japanese, they do not "christen" it, as we do; but, instead, they hang over the ship's prow a large pasteboard cage full of birds. Directly the ship is afloat, a man pulls a string, the cage opens, and the birds fly off and make the air alive with their songs and the whir of their wings. The idea is that the birds welcome the vessel as she begins her career as a thing of life. Give yourself up to Christ with all your heart; launch your soul on the ocean of his love, and all the birds of the Spirit shall sing in your ears songs of forgiveness and hope until everything that is good enough to be true will seem to be, as it is, possible for the future of your soul.

SHARING THE INHERITANCE WITH JESUS.

"Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—*Rom.* viii. 17.

THERE is no richer promise in the Bible than that set forth with differing phraseology in many passages assuring us that we may be adopted into the family of God and share in all the inheritance of Jesus Christ our Saviour. We have known this always, and the story has been so oft repeated to us that it may have lost the keenness of delight which it ought to give. Men take great pride in tracing their family relationships back to some royal personage, or to some famous historic character; but it is scarcely worth while when a far greater honor is assured to every one, however poor and humble he may be, who will accept the brotherhood of Jesus Christ. The most splendid character in the ages, the one perfectly ideal character, on whose record for

heroism and goodness and power there is not a stain, offers to lift us out of the mire and clay of sin, and set our feet upon the solid rock of heirship with him, in an inheritance nobler than that which any man of wealth or any king in the world could bestow.

This is the great central fact of Christianity. The chief characteristic of the Christian life is that we are to share the inheritance of Jesus. To be a Christian is to be like Jesus. We are to share his fate in all worlds. It is impossible that we can go our own way in this world and share the inheritance with him in the next. If we are to have part in the heavenly mansions we must not shun his yoke of service or sorrow in this world. In the very verse from which we have taken our text, Paul continues—"if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The servant is not greater than his lord, and we ought not to desire to be more popular or successful in business, or society, or church circles, than Jesus Christ would be were he here. We are joint-heirs with Christ. We must not evade our fellowship with him in sharing temporary discomforts or burdens, but, like him, must have our eyes on the goal at the end of the race.

There is a very striking illustration of the kind of spirit we ought to show as Christians in the single reference which is made in the New Testament to Onesiphorus. Paul, in his last letter to Timothy, burst forth into this exclamation of gratitude: "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." Paul was a poor prisoner in Rome, with money gone, friends far away, and in great need of somebody to love and comfort him. Onesiphorus hunted him up, and, counting Paul's chain a badge of honor rather than of shame, loved him all the more when he saw this indication of Nero's cruelty. He was so true a Christian that he was willing to share the fate of every true friend of Jesus. We want that spirit to-day—men and women who will stand by the right because it is right, whether it is popular or not. The church of Christ is not to be a poor time-server waiting on politicians and demagogues to lead the way toward public or private righteousness, but wherever the issue rises we are to stand by the plain and simple standard of our Lord, and if for the time being it is in the minority, never haul down our colors, but go with them if need be to our cross. There is an Easter

for every such crucifixion. In sharing Christ's inheritance there may be times that are full of trial, like the forty days which Christ spent in the wilderness with the wild beasts; but if we share the wilderness with Jesus we shall also share with him the Mount of Transfiguration. It is better to go through the darkness with Christ, than to walk in the blazing noon without him.

A novel method of treatment for a sick child has been adopted with success by a druggist in an Eastern city. About nine years ago the wife of the druggist died, leaving a delicate baby boy to her husband's care. All his soul was wrapped up in the child, and he watched him tenderly and saw that the people with whom he placed him gave him the most careful attention. But in spite of their care the child dwindled and faded. He was afflicted with a nervous disease which developed into spinal trouble. When he was eight years old, the physicians who had been attending him almost broke the father's heart by telling him that there was no hope of saving his little son's life. But the father had been studying the disease himself, and he determined, as the physicians had given up the case, that he would treat him on a system of his own. His

theory was based on the benefit of complete seclusion and unvarying conditions. Under his store he had a large cellar hewn from the solid rock and perfectly dry. He partitioned off a square of about twenty feet of this area, laid a thick carpet, and furnished it with miniature furniture of the most beautiful and comfortable kind. No ray of sunlight was permitted to enter this underground room, but a cluster of electric lights in the ceiling gave uniform light night and day. Music-boxes made soft melody, and toys such as boys love were scattered about. Into this room the father brought his boy and made him understand that the luxurious nest was his own and that the remainder of the cellar was his playground. No one else was ever permitted to enter. The boy heard no voice but that of his father and saw no one else. At the beginning he was terribly thin; he could not dress, and could scarcely feed, himself. In a few weeks a decided improvement was seen. The boy grew stronger and showed more intelligence. The absolute quiet and seclusion suited him and he gained cheerfulness and courage. His father spent as much of his time as he could in the cellar with him, and slept there. As his strength

increased gymnastic appliances were introduced, and one day the father brought him a set of carpenter's tools, which proved a great source of amusement. After twenty months of this secluded life, the boy is almost robust, his nervousness has disappeared, and he can talk intelligently. The father proposes now to gradually introduce him to ordinary life and send him to a kindergarten school. It has been a strange method of cure, but it has been a wonderful success. Now if you were to hear that a father who was well-to-do and had a fine house had shut his son up in the cellar under his store for twenty months, and did not understand his motive or know the circumstances, you would be very likely to pronounce him cruel. So God's dealings with us are often misunderstood. Many times in the wilderness of temptation we misunderstand God's motive, and men looking on may imagine that we are hypocrites and unworthy of God's deliverance, or else that it is not true that God interferes in behalf of his children in times of calamity. We are very short-sighted when we reason in that way. Perhaps I speak to some at this moment who are in the cellar of trial and darkness. Do not take it for granted that

God is angry with you because the darkness curtains you in. God may see that the one thing above all else that can strengthen you and build you up for time and eternity is the experience of darkness and trial. No sincere Christian ever has to go into the place of trial alone; our Saviour will visit us there—nay, more; he will abide with us there and comfort us in the darkest hour.

No really great Christian work can be accomplished except by one who has a keen sense of sharing the fate of Christ. The presence of the divine Christ lifts us up into a new atmosphere and strengthens us to do great deeds. Saul is only a common persecutor, hunting men down for opinion's sake, until a vision of the glorious Christ startles him out of himself and transforms him into the clear-eyed, broad-souled, brave Paul who forever after shares the inheritance of Jesus with all gladness. If he fights with beasts for the pleasure of a brutal populace, he glances at the scars left from the tiger's claw and calls them "the marks of the Lord Jesus." If he is a prisoner, he is not Nero's prisoner, but with tender pathos and comfort he writes himself down as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ." No wonder Paul is ready to say, "If

so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

If we share Christ's sufferings with complete devotion, we shall share his inheritance, also, in the joy and glory which reward his service both in this world and in the world to come. When Jesus was going away he comforted his disciples with the assurance that they should not only continue his work in the world, but should do greater works than he had done, by the aid of the Holy Spirit whom he would send unto them. What we need above all else is a supreme consecration of ourselves, with everything that we have and are, to the service of Christ, that we may share also in that divine power which is the inheritance of the wholly consecrated life. There has been many another man like Mr. Moody, who preached many times without bringing about conversions before he made the supreme self-surrender to Christ which brought the enduement of power and transformed him into the marvel of spiritual energy and effectiveness he has been ever since. Tamil David, the wonderful

Hindoo evangelist, though yet a young man, has won to Christ tens of thousands of men and women in many lands. He preached for a long time, however, without this power. One day, after preaching, he met a Salvation Army captain. He was not an educated man, but he was practical. He was a man wise in spiritual things. He said: "David, my friend, come here. I see you have good material. I heard you preaching. You are strong, you have a good voice, but do you know there is one thing lacking?"

David said: "What is that?"

"You haven't the fire as yet; accept the fire."

"What makes you say that? Tell me."

"My dear brother, unless you get the life more abundant, you may preach as much as you like, but you cannot win souls for Christ; you may preach and preach, but all will be in vain. You have all the materials; only one thing is lacking in you. As soon as you get the fire you will be a different man and souls will be converted."

That poor Salvation Army captain led Tamil David tenderly to a complete consecration of himself, with all he had and was and hoped for, to be the servant of Christ—

to simply share the fate of Jesus; and, sure enough, from that day David was a transformed man. He went into the streets and groves to preach, and every man that heard him felt that some marvelous power had fallen upon him. More than ten thousand people were converted within three months. People were filled with the Holy Ghost. The Hindoo priests crowded around and asked: "What is this?" David answered: "The same power as at Pentecost." Many priests fell down and cried for mercy. And during the last few months thousands of men and women in Chicago have been converted under the simple preaching of this consecrated man. He calls it "the abundant life." Whatever it is, it is what we want. I covet it for myself, and for you, more than any earthly good. It is possible for us to have it. God is not partial, to grant this abundant life only to Peter, and Moody, and Tamil David and their compeers. Christ came to give *us* more abundant life, also. We have a right to this inheritance of spiritual power. If we do not share it, it will be our own fault. God make us worthy to share it!

If we are joint-heirs with Christ here, we shall also share his inheritance in heaven; we

shall rejoice with him through the immortal years. If we confess him here, he will confess us there. If we bear the cross now, we shall wear the crown then. Many of our friends and fellow-Christians who have shared the battle with us, whose courage has often comforted us and inspired us, have already laid down the sword for the scepter of immortal glory. How rapidly they pass away from our side, making earth almost lonely, and filling heaven with attractive faces which beckon us onward. If we are faithful the day shall come when we shall hear, as they have already heard, the good cheer of our Lord's voice saying unto us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

THE MESSENGER OF SALVATION.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." — *Titus* ii. 11.

Men have always been trying to devise some scheme by which they might buy salvation from their sins. The young ruler who came to Christ crying out, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" had this idea in mind. He thought there must be some way by which he might earn heaven. He was, no doubt, ready to set off on a pilgrimage like the later Crusaders, or like Sir Launfal and his compeers who went in search of the Holy Grail, if in that way he might make sure of a happy immortality. Many people in our own time are expecting somehow to work out salvation by an act of penance — as if by torturing the body one might cleanse and adorn the soul! And even among people who do not believe

in the efficacy of penances there is still a feeling that they may fit themselves by deeds of benevolence or righteousness for entrance into the kingdom of God.

The whole spirit of the Bible, however, is in line with our text, that salvation comes to us, if it comes at all, by the free grace of God. It is God's gift. Paul puts it very clearly in his letter to the Romans when he says, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not possible for us to lay by any store of virtue, or extra stock of goodness, by which we may merit salvation. Here is a man who is in debt to his employer, and he goes on necessarily spending everything that he earns, week after week, in order to live. The months pass, and it is impossible for him to lay by a cent to pay on his debt. How can that man ever get free from his debt? Suppose the employer should come to him some day and say, "I find that you are hopelessly in debt. My heart is touched to see you going on this way, with that old debt forever hanging over your head, and with no prospect of ever escaping from under its pall. I have taken compassion on you, and am ready to cancel all the old indebtedness, and take you into the

business as though you were my own son, and let you share with me in all the pleasures and profits of the estate." What would you think of a man to whom such an offer was made if he should say, "No; it is really very kind of you to offer it, but I am not fit yet; I must wait until I save up a small sum at least to pay on that old debt"? And yet that is what men are doing who are trying to get to heaven through some righteousness of their own. My brother, it is a hopeless task. You are in debt already beyond possibility of payment. Your sins hang over you a sentence of condemnation. If you were never to sin again in your life the sins of the past would yet mean sorrow and disaster. You can never blot them out, and you can never atone for them, because the Lord has a right to all your service. If you were to live a spotless life from now on till the judgment, you could not lay up anything in the way of righteous conduct to cancel the debt of your sin already committed. Here is where God's free grace comes in. "God so loved the world" — that is the message which tells the story of the beginning of salvation; "the grace of God bringeth salvation" is the message of our text.

That word "grace" many people use with-

out thinking what it means. As we use words now, it means to favor one; to give something out of pure generosity. In business, men talk about certain days of grace, which means that certain days will be granted in the meeting of an obligation which by stern legal right you would not have. So salvation through Christ was born not of justice, but of love, and every one of us, whatever we may consider our degree of sinfulness to be, or whatever the world may think about our level of character, must take salvation humbly as the free gift of God.

The note which runs through this text, and which, indeed, is the key-note of all the Bible, is in that word "salvation." At the bottom of all religions that fill the earth are the deep unrest of a guilty conscience and the cry of a sinful heart to be freed from its consciousness of guilt and find peace with God. If we could only know what struggles are going on every day in the hearts of men and women who are fighting to be free from some evil tendency or wicked habit, and yet fighting in vain, we would stand back aghast at the spectacle. There are more tragedies in real life than are ever put on the stage or find their way into fiction. The grace of God through Jesus

Christ comes to bring salvation to men and women in such a case.

There is a curious old tradition connected with the park and manor house of Lambton, on the estate of the Earl of Durham in England. The tradition is that in the fourteenth century the heir, young John Lambton, was leading a dissolute life which was punished in a strange way. He was one day fishing in the river, when he invoked the powers of evil to give him aid and success in one last cast of the rod. A great strain came upon the line, and, after a tremendous effort, he landed an immense and hideous worm. This in disgust he threw into a well close by, where it grew with such marvelous rapidity as soon to fill it up with its body and limbs; and consequently it was able to scramble out. This horrid worm made its headquarters on a large rock in the center of the river, coiling about it, and at night raided the country round about, feeding upon the young of the cattle and the sheep, and causing men and women and children to flee for their lives. It finally threatened the castle itself. To propitiate it the Lord of Lambton placed troughs of milk in the way by which it was to approach; but all to no avail. One brave knight after an-

other sought to make way with this terrible monster, but every one that attempted it was crushed to death in its tremendous folds. At last there came a knight of Rhodes, who took his position on the summit of the worm-rock to beard it in its own fortress. Sword in hand, he awaited the coming of the monster. At last the worm of Lambton had met its match and was slain.

Sin yielded to is like the worm of Lambton. It grows with every day of life; it becomes more ravenous as it is conciliated. The more men compromise with their sins, the more completely are they brought under their power. There is only one Knight who is able to make ever-successful war against the sinful habits which devastate and despoil the soul — Jesus, the Knight of God's grace, who comes with the sword of the Spirit. Many who hear me can testify that before his sword the most tyrannical and oppressive sin goes down in defeat. Many of you have appealed to other sources of help and have failed, but Christ always conquers. He will come into your heart, where sin has made its fortress, and, making his stand in the country which the enemy has invaded, he will fight to the death every sin which threatens you with

ruin. He will dwell in your heart, and it is easy to be good in fellowship with him.

A little girl suddenly died out of a home which she had filled with gladness and joy by her sweet temper and genuine goodness. When her parents came to select a motto for the stone which marked her resting-place they had chiseled these words: "Of whom all her playmates said, it was easy to be good in her company." Could a prettier thing than that be said of any one? We all know how hard it is to be good in some people's company, and how in the company of others the very moral atmosphere that breathes from face and conversation seems healthful and wholesome, so that we go away feeling, "It is easy to be good in their company." A distinguished infidel once said that he did not dare to stay any longer at the residence of a certain Christian man for fear he might become a Christian in spite of himself. What he meant was that the spirit of Christ was so manifest in this man, and his sincerity and righteousness were so apparent, that it was almost impossible not to believe in the divine Christ when in his company. One of the most glorious things about inviting men to accept

the grace of God which offers them salvation is that we may promise to them the fellowship of Christ in their daily lives. Many times men and women say to me, "I can't live a Christian life situated just as I am." But if you give your heart to Christ you will not be situated just as you are. You will have this great difference to begin with, that the pure and loving Saviour will become as real and conscious a personality to you as your dearest earthly friend; and of all the people that ever lived, Christ is the one in whose company it is easiest to be good. If some of you only knew how the volcanic anger and bitterness of your heart which have caused you so much sorrow might be forever flooded over and drowned out by the peace of God, you would not hesitate a moment.

One of the most beautiful sights a traveler sees in Europe is the Bay of Naples. No one who has ever seen it on a quiet summer evening, and watched it as the night gathered and through the darkness the flashes of fire from the summit of Vesuvius, like some torch of God, lighted it, can ever forget the scene. But scientific men tell us that that lovely Bay of Naples is the crater of a worn-out and

flooded volcano. In the early morning of the world's history it was perhaps the greatest volcano on the earth; it belched forth from its heart floods of seething lava. At last it sank down and down, its fiery heart was quelled, the lava ceased to flow, and in from the Mediterranean, perhaps first in some glorious day of storm, swept the white caps of the sea and overflowed the crater and filled it full, and to-day the beautiful waters lie in peace and mirror back the shining heavens above.

There are men listening to me who have had an experience like that in their own lives. There was a time when evil temper, or fiery lust, or vicious habit, burned and flamed in your heart until to your aroused conscience it seemed like the very gaping mouth of hell. And then in some tender way God brought his free grace through Jesus Christ to your attention. With trembling, almost hopeless, heart you opened the door to him, and into your heart and life there have poured the beautiful waters of salvation. The old crater is filled up with the waves of peace. Your heart no longer belches forth flames of evil, but is a mirror where God looks and sees his own face. Oh, my friend, you who are ready to

despair because of your sins, what has been wrought in others may be accomplished in you; for the free grace of God brings salvation to all men. Will you accept it here and now?

THE IDEAL CHARACTER.

"The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."—*Isa.* xxxv. 2.

THIS is a grand and suggestive picture of the union of strength and beauty in Christian character. In Bible times the cedar of Lebanon was the ideal of grandeur and strength. When Ezekiel desired to sketch the strongest possible picture in describing the Assyrians, he did so in these most beautiful words representing a forest of cedar-trees in the Lebanon mountains: "A cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above

all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young. . . . Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. . . . The fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut-trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty." When one reads a description like that and remembers that it is such strong and splendid things in nature which God uses to set forth the ideal which is in his mind concerning the life and character which it is possible for us to illustrate, he is humbled and inspired at the same time. There is certainly in this picture the strongest possible suggestion that the Christian is to live a strong and vigorous and useful life. There is nothing weak or feeble in the outline of character suggested to us here. Indeed, the whole Bible idea of righteous character is strong and muscular. Over and over again some prophet like Elijah stands on his Mount Carmel and says, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!"

The Christian life is a life of will, and decision, and purpose. There is no idle drifting about it. Jesus himself said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The Christian life is one that is lived on purpose, a life of deliberate intention. Dr. Charles Parkhurst, in an editorial in "Zion's Herald," eloquently says that intention is an important element in the fashioning of the religious life. It enters into the beginnings and remains in the progress of our religious experience. Intention is the attitude of the mind when ready to act, and always indicates a certain kind of strength, a consciousness of power. Like Paul's racer in Hebrews, there is the firm planting of the foot, the bending toward the goal, and the girding of the loins for the race. The gaze is steady, the muscles tense, and the energies are compressed for the forward leap. This deep, earnest intention goes before all great achievements and is the crowning characteristic of all superior and masterful lives.

One of the greatest of the Florentine painters was Bartolommeo. His great success in producing works that are immortal was made possible by a strong moral revolution wrought in his soul under the preaching of Savonarola.

It was while he was painting "The Last Judgment" in St. Mark's. Savonarola was preaching in Florence with a fiery fervor and fearless eloquence that burned the heart of prince and of pauper alike. Under the inspiration of his wonderful sermons the artists of Florence reenacted the scenes that were witnessed in Ephesus when, under the preaching of Paul and Silas, a certain class of men brought their vicious books to the value of thousands of dollars and burned them in the public streets. So it was in Florence with the painters. Bartolommeo was so profoundly affected that he united with others in kindling a bonfire on the main street of Florence, into which he cast all his designs, drawings and studies which represented profane or lascivious subjects. From that day on Bartolommeo ceased to paint for his own honor or gain, but as a son of God he consecrated his art to God's glory.

Strength in God's world always indicates usefulness. The lofty mountain is high not for itself alone, but that it may be a reservoir for the valleys. The cedar of Lebanon did not lift its branches into the clouds for its own glory only, but that it might be a safe nesting-place for the birds of the air and give

shadow for man and beast on the earth beneath. So in Christian character, as in physical things, the condition of strength is usefulness and one feeds the other. The story is told of a rich Hollander who had an only daughter whom he loved exceedingly, and he ransacked the earth for beautiful things to satisfy her wants. But after a while she seemed to lose all joy in living. Her health became delicate, she had no zest in life; and in spite of all he could do it seemed as though she would fade away before his eyes. The greatest physicians exerted their skill in her behalf in vain. Finally, the father heard of a physician in the city whose practice was largely among the poor, yet the report of whose marvelous cures had repeatedly spread throughout the entire community. This man was recommended to the rich Hollander. At first he would not think of employing him, so great was his contempt for his plebeian associations. But he finally became so alarmed for his child that he thrust his pride away and sent for him. The doctor came, saw and heard. The father related to him the long story of the sickness of his daughter, and then conducted him to his patient. The physician examined and questioned, and received

languid answers. Then he had his patient pass back and forth before him in the room a few times, when, exhausted, she sank into an easy-chair. Finally the father, with beating heart, asked him: "Doctor, is it possible to help her?" "I hope God will help," answered the physician; "but you must implicitly follow my advice." "What kind of treatment, then, do you expect to begin?" "You procure for her a neat, substantial dress, such as the common people wear, and a hat to match the dress. I shall make calls with your daughter to-morrow," answered the physician. The father clasped his hands together above his head and exclaimed: "Make calls with her? She has not been in the open air for days and weeks!" To this exclamation the physician shrugged his shoulders and said: "If you will not follow my advice, then I cannot help you. To-morrow at ten o'clock I shall be here again, but for the last time if you do not follow my advice." With this he departed. The peculiar conduct of the man had a great influence on the father, and he concluded, after much reflection, to follow the advice of the new doctor. The prescription was filled. The apparel, new and uncommon to her, aroused new life in the girl, so that she was dressed

and ready at the appointed hour. The physician came, and, taking her arm, left the house, while the father with great anxiety watched them from his window until they disappeared. On the street the doctor told her: "We shall not go far to-day." On the next street they entered the second story of a house wherein poverty and sickness had held sway for a long time. The mother, a widow, was severely bedridden; the children, with emaciated faces, stood about her; and poverty was written in only too readable terms in the whole room. The doctor instructed and encouraged them, and left them some medicine without charging for it. His companion, who had not visited anything similar in all her life, was astonished; her heart went out in sympathy for this distressed home. As they left the house, she took the doctor's arm, and, looking him in the face, said: "But, doctor, my father must help in this case." Upon this a color came into her face, such as had not been there for a long time. And the physician answered: "Yes; do not forget to most earnestly entreat your father for help; but remember there is a greater Helper than your father, and entreat him also." By this time they had reached the street, and the physician said: "Well,

shall we go to another place?" And she answered: "Yes; I will go with you." There they found distress again, only in a different form, which also aroused her sympathy. After this he took his patient home. To the questions of her father as to how far they had gone and where they had been she scarcely replied. She began at once: "Father, I have seen great distress, and you must help." Then the story was told him. When the father saw these signs of life in his daughter, he gladly granted her requests. But the doctor had again particular instructions. He said to his patient: "All that these poor people are to have, you must yourself deliver. Your servant may carry it, but you must accompany her. You must give no money; but clothing, things to eat, and such like. Every time you call you must read to the sick mother a Psalm which you have previously been careful to select." This new prescription worked marvelously. As the young woman fulfilled these instructions she found herself on the highroad to health. She was again interested in something; she learned to pray, to love, and to rejoice. The dress of the common citizen, worn in service, became to her the dress of salvation. There are many whose Chris-

tian life is weak and languid who might be saved if they would follow the same prescription in giving themselves up to humble imitation of the Master in going about doing good.

The chief glory of Lebanon is not, after all, in its height and majesty of appearance, but in its being a great reservoir to make fertile the long slope and to fill with beauty the flowering plains and valleys. So a Christian character is not for strength only, but for beauty as well. It is beautiful in its strength. The sweet graces of the Christian life, such as love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness, are blossoms which are the outward manifestation of those deep underlying roots of purpose which nourish a Christian character. It is said that there are certain kinds of weeds that lie at the bottom of the sea, but when their flowering time comes they shoot long, slender tendrils up through the salt water toward the light, and float upon the top, so that their flowers may open in thankfulness to the sun. So in the depths of the soul, imbedded in our hidden nature, lie the roots of purpose and ambition which are the sources of our growth; but the sweet graces of the Christian life must blossom and shed their fragrance where they may give joy and blessing to all who see.

And there are no flowers so beautiful as those which bloom upon a true Christian character.

A very pretty little story is told about Edward Everett Hale: A few years ago a man who has now made a name for himself found himself in London, utterly discouraged, and, as the phrase goes, "stranded." There was no one to whom he could turn, and in despair he took passage home on the first steamer. To cap the climax of his misfortunes, a felon broke out on his right thumb, so that it was impossible for him to hold a pen. When he stepped on the gang-plank of the steamer, whom should he see but Dr. Hale! Now this gentleman had met Dr. Hale but once in his life, and had no claim on him and no reason to believe that he would be remembered at all. But to his delight, before he had a chance even to test the recognition, he was grasped by the hand and Dr. Hale said: "I am delighted, Mr. ——, to see you. I had no idea that I should know a soul on board, and now we'll have a pleasant passage over." It was not very long until, with characteristic sympathy, Dr. Hale had learned all his young friend's woes. "Let me write your letters," he said; "there is nothing I en-

joy so much as writing." So Dr. Hale became the poor fellow's stenographer, and from dictation wrote up all his correspondence. When his friend was confined to his stateroom, Dr. Hale went down and spent hours every day telling him stories, cheering him out of himself, and acting like a professional entertainer, until, before the voyage was over, he had made a new man out of the despairing fellow. When they arrived in Boston Dr. Hale did not rest until he had put the young man on his feet again. It is said that when this story was told to a literary man in Boston he turned and said: "We don't consider that much of anything for Hale to do. Why, there is hardly a man of my age about Boston who has been suffering or friendless or discouraged, but Dr. Hale has put him on his feet, and at what cost to himself no man knows. There are a dozen well-known men I could mention who, but for that grand man, would have gone to the dogs. I am one of them myself — God bless him!" And yet, as in this case of the poor fellow on shipboard, it seems such a little thing to do that many people would not have thought it worth while; but the value was priceless to the man who received it.

"It was only a sunny smile,
And little it cost in the giving:
But it scattered the night
Like morning light,
And made the day worth living.
Through life's dull warp a woof it wove
In shining colors of hope and love;
And the angels smiled as they watched above,
Yet little it cost in the giving.

"It was only a kindly word,
A word that was lightly spoken;
Yet not in vain,
For it stilled the pain
Of a heart that was nearly broken.
It strengthened a faith beset by fears,
And groping blindly through mists of tears
For light to brighten the coming years,
Although it was lightly spoken."

CHRIST'S NEW ROAD TO HEAVEN.

"A new and living way."— *Heb.* x. 20.

MANY times in our Eastern cities I have seen at the corner of the street the sign, "Dangerous Passing," or "No Thoroughfare," or "Not a Highway." There may be a way through, but such notices are intended to indicate that if one undertakes to pass he does so at his own peril. It is not a living way in the eye of the street commissioner, or the city government; it is a dead way. Under the Hebrew dispensation there was a way of sacrifice through the blood of goats and lambs and calves, which led earnest souls toward heaven; but when in the fullness of time Christ came into the world and made once for all a sacrifice for our sins by giving his own body to be slain, the old way became dead, and Christ opened up the new and living way — a way which shall be alive with welcome and hope

until the final judgment shall settle the destiny of every human being.

There are many reasons for calling the way of salvation through Christ a living way. It is a living way because Christ is living. He became our way of salvation through death, but he hath broken the bands of death asunder and forever liveth to make intercession for us. At the court of heaven he ever keeps the way of mercy open through his intercessions. Beautifully does the poet sing of this precious intercession:

"Where is my God? Does he retire
Beyond the reach of human sighs?
Are these weak breathings of desire
Too languid to ascend the skies?

"Look up, my soul, with cheerful eye;
See where the great Redeemer stands,
The glorious Advocate on high,
With precious incense in his hands!

"He sweetens every humble groan,
He recommends each broken prayer;
Recline thy hope on him alone,
Whose power and love forbid despair."

It is a living way, also, because new travelers are all the time coming into it. The gates are open day and night, and every one

who leaves his sins behind him finds abundant welcome. The wages of sin is death, and no seeds of death are allowed on that highway of holiness; the one condition of entrance is that we turn away from sin. No one is so degraded, no one so handicapped by inheritance of evil, but that he will be given most abundant entrance if he will give up his sins.

A Christian woman once visited an institution where homeless and friendless children are cared for. Among the little inmates she came to one to whom her heart went out, and she said, "This child I want for my own."

"He is not for adoption," said the person in charge.

The woman looked around, but saw no other child that attracted her as this one had, and went away sorrowful. In a few days she came again to visit the child.

At length, with tears in her eyes, she said: "Why cannot I have the child I want?"

They told her then the story of the baby, and of the utter depravity of its parents. There was bad blood in the child, and it would be a terrible risk to take it.

The woman went away, but after three or four days she returned, saying: "I have come for my baby. If you think he will be more

likely to be a good boy and man with my mother love, brought up in a Christian home, give him to me. God will take care of the rest."

Her love and prayers prevailed. They gave the ill-born waif into her hands. She took him to her heart and consecrated him to Christ. Many years have passed — the little, helpless, hopeless waif has grown into a magnificent specimen of Christian manhood. Thank God, this new and living way is open for the steps of the waifs of sin on the same terms as to the heirs of culture and fortune.

It is a living way in another important sense, and that is that the travelers in this way grow more vigorous and alive the farther they go. What a popular road it would be if there were anywhere in the country a highway charged with vigor and life, so that a man walking on it would lose his rheumatism, and his weariness, and the stiffness in his joints, and with every step he made on the road there should be communicated into his limbs from the way itself some electric health restorer to supply the freshness and suppleness of youth as he walked. The way of salvation is like that. It is the way of life. Men get more abundant life as they pursue

this heavenly way. There is no disease or death there. Some people wander off the road and fall into spiritual disease and death; but no man walks straight forward on the highway of holiness without finding that life grows stronger and more vigorous with the years. "The vulture's eye hath not seen" this path. Vultures are always looking for dead carcasses, and there are none on this new and living way. The Christian life is safe to every one who keeps to the path. No ravenous beast treads on that road. There is no lion there: "The lion's whelp hath not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it."

It is a new way. It never gets old. It is ever fresh and beautiful. It is not only new to the people who have just come into it, but if you talk with those who have been on the way for half a century, they will tell you it gets more delightfully fresh and beautiful as they go on. It is new and strong, solid and safe, and will never break under your feet.

There was a terrible scene in an opera-house in a great city recently. The play on the stage bore the appropriate title, "The Dangers of a Great City." Suddenly in the midst of a performance there was a crash, and the central dome of the ceiling fell, killing and in-

juring many of the spectators. An investigation revealed the cause of the disaster to be that the heavy dome was held up merely by wooden trusses and joists. These, worm-eaten and rotten through and through, were warped, the nails and bolts were rusty and loose, the brick walls at the side were old and crumbling. The wonder was that it had not fallen long before. There is a broad road that leads to death which is built like that. Ever and anon men are breaking through into eternal disaster and despair.

What road are you on? This is the important question. Is it the way of sin that leads down to death, or is it the new and living way that leads to heaven? Dr. Joseph F. Berry relates that he was on a train a little while ago which had gotten several miles out of the city when the conductor came around after the tickets. A quiet-looking gentleman just in front of him handed over his ticket.

"You are on the wrong road," said the conductor; "this ticket reads to Detroit, and you are now on your way to the South."

"The wrong road! Is it possible? Then you must stop the train, sir. I am due to fill an important engagement at Detroit to-night, and I *must* be there. Stop this train. Stop

at the junction and let me off! I think I can get back, and catch a later train East.

The conductor said he was already behind time and could not stop.

"You *must stop!*" thundered the passenger, now thoroughly aroused, and stepping out into the aisle.

The conductor looked into his resolute face, hesitated only a moment, and then seized the bell-cord. The train came to a sudden stop just beyond the junction. It so happened that a north-bound train stood on the siding. It was boarded by the determined passenger, and before the train he had been on was well under way again, he was speeding back to Chicago.

Some who hear me to-night, if they could only realize how rapidly sinful habits were speeding them away from God and heaven, would cry out with all the energy of their souls: "Stop this train!"

Alas! it is not always that a traveler who has mistaken the way so readily turns about toward his destination. Sometimes a mistake of that kind, even though finally rectified, may cause large expense and much anxiety and sorrow.

Not long since a citizen of Chicago had

been spending a few days at Victoria, British Columbia. His business in the town being finished, he inquired the best way of reaching Tacoma, the next city on his route. He was told that a steamer would sail for Tacoma that afternoon, and he promptly packed his valise and started for the dock. He knew that he had no time to spare, so when he reached the dock and saw a steamer preparing to leave, he hurried to get on board. The gang-plank had already been drawn in, but he tossed his valise on board and jumped after it. He congratulated himself on the triumph, always so gratifying to a busy man, of just catching a departing ship or train, and speedily went below to make himself at home for the trip. When he came back on deck, he made some inquiry which elicited the fact that the steamer on which he was traveling was bound not for Tacoma, Washington, as he had supposed, but for the Hawaiian Islands. The Tacoma steamer had been lying next to the one he was on, and in his hurry he had not noticed the difference in the size of the two vessels. There was no way to get ashore, and he was compelled to travel twenty-five hundred miles out of his way, and will have to travel the same distance

back again, to reach his destination. It is probable that that man will never again start on a journey without making sure that he is traveling in the right direction.

And yet many of you are traveling in just the opposite direction from where you say you want to go. You say you want to go to heaven, and yet you refuse to enter the way which leads there. You are going on in the path of sin, getting deeper into the mire all the time, and every step is taking you straight away from heaven. Many who have found the way of salvation in later years have come to it by going a long way around, like the man who went to Honolulu in order to go to Tacoma. There have been scores of men and women converted in this church recently who will earnestly tell you that if they had taken the straight path into the new and living way to heaven from the Sunday-school, or from the knee of their praying mother, life would have been infinitely happier for them. There is nothing that they regret so bitterly as the fact that through sinful habits, and experience in wickedness, and days and nights of remorse, they wandered from the way that was only a step from them in their childhood.

But, alas! many who go on the other way never get back. We rejoice over the prodigals who get home, but angels weep over the prodigals who die away from home. Come straight into the new way to-night! You will find that in youth or in old age, in prosperity or in adversity, the new and living way will be a way of freshness and beauty. You need Christ as much in the light as in the darkness; you need him in success as much as in defeat. In the new way he will walk with you in blessed fellowship.

Somebody said recently to "Fanny Crosby," the blind poet and hymn-writer: "You never refer to your affliction in your hymns, unless it is in the one entitled 'All the Way my Saviour Leads Me.'" Her reply was: "I never thought of it while writing that hymn; we need the Saviour to lead us even if we can see;" and the bright smile that played upon the face of the blind hymn-writer revealed the fact that Christ was ever guiding her.

I bid you welcome at this hour, out of all the darkness and perilous ways of sin, into the new and living way which leads ever upward to the heavenly city.

THREE CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES.

"One thing thou lackest."—*Mark* x. 21.
"One thing I do."— *Phil.* iii. 13.
"One thing I know."—*John* ix. 25.

HERE are three great Christian certainties. The first was spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. An aspiring ambitious young man who was desirous of making the best of himself, and who saw in Christ something more splendid than he had ever seen in any one else, came pressing through the crowd as Jesus walked on the highway. With the impulsiveness of youth and the energy of an earnest soul he fell on his knees before the Saviour, exclaiming: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Christ inquired of him about the commandments and named some of them; and looking the Master straight in the eye, with unaffected honesty he declared, "Master, all these have I observed

from my youth." And then there is said of this young man what is not said of any one else whom Jesus met among all the people who thronged him from time to time, with the exception of the little band of his personal friends. Mark says: "Then Jesus beholding him loved him." But Jesus perceived the secret danger of this young man to be his love of the world and its treasures, and so went straight to the mark with his unerring accuracy and said: "One thing thou lackest." Had he told the young man how to become a Christian by any sort of works, or at any cost save the surrender of his whole heart and treasure to the will of God, he would no doubt have heard him gladly; but he went away with a cloud on his brow, grieved and sad, because of his unwillingness to cut the cord of his worldliness and follow Christ in humble service. What a great blunder it was! We have no knowledge that he ever became a Christian. We are very sure he did not during the life of Jesus, for so interesting an event would have been mentioned in one of these gospels. Poor man! he clung to his worldly treasures a little while longer, and they probably caused him as much sorrow as they did joy, and then he went, bankrupt, into

eternity. If he had followed Jesus' advice and put his purse at his disposal, he would have had a hundredfold more joy in this world, and in the world to come all the treasures of heaven.

Dr. Junker, the Russian explorer, was much wiser than that when he found himself far up the Nile with the warlike Mahdists blocking his way to the coast. There was only one chance for his life, and that was to persuade some Arab trader to become responsible for him. But the Arabs would not take him in their caravans for fear they would lose the friendship of the native chiefs along the road. At last, Junker went to one of the traders with this proposal: "You cannot take me with you as a friend," he said, "but you can take me as a slave. Look at this." And Dr. Junker showed the trader an order written in Arabic and signed by a well-known firm in Zanzibar, authorizing the doctor to make any arrangements he desired with the Arabs of Central Africa and the firm would honor his drafts. "Now," continued Dr. Junker, "I have written out a contract, and if you will sign it with me I shall reach the coast. It provides that when you deliver me alive at Zanzibar, the sum of fifteen hundred

dollars will be paid to you by this firm. You cannot take me with you as a traveler or a friend, and you must therefore take me as a slave." The contract was made on this basis. In passing through the hostile tribes, the white man was represented to be a slave who had been purchased from a negro tribe farther north. As a slave he passed muster even at the court of cruel King Mwanga, and was allowed to pass on in peace with his supposed master.

What was a deception in this case is a genuine truth in our escape from the condemnation of the broken law of God. Our only hope of salvation is that Jesus Christ hath redeemed us from under the law. No man or woman in this world will ever be saved because of merit. We are all sinners against God. We have broken the law which says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The hope of salvation comes through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who has ransomed us by his own blood, and God has promised that whosoever will accept this redemption may be saved as the servant of Jesus Christ who has redeemed us, and who has the right to our love and our service. And so to every one here who has not accepted Jesus, and rendered

him the obedience of an open confession, Christ is saying, "One thing thou lackest." But, alas! it is as bad to lack that as to lack everything. It is like the drowning sailor missing the life-line; he misses only one thing, but, missing that, misses all.

The next Christian certainty is the decision, with the eye on the prize at the end of the race, to concentrate your will and purpose as Paul did, in saying, "This one thing I do." Paul did that through storm and shine, and wrought out for himself a glorious immortality. Oh, that God may give to you who are halting between two opinions a new drawing of the Holy Spirit that will enable you to turn your face toward Christ and say: "One thing I do"! I would that you could feel the importance of it as did a man to whom Bishop McCabe spoke a few weeks ago. He was in a strange city, and as the hackman got down off his box and opened the door the bishop grasped his hand as he paid his fare, saying: "Good night; I hope to meet you again in glory." The bishop had often done that, and he gave the matter no special thought at this time. He went into the house, met his host, and retired to his room for the night. About midnight his host knocked at his chamber door and

said: "Chaplain, that hackman has come back, and he says that he has got to see you to-night. I told him that he had better wait until morning, but he said, 'No, sir; I must see him to-night, and I know that he will be willing to see me.'" When the hackman came up, a broad-shouldered, rough-looking man with a whip in his hand, and stood there in the bishop's presence, great tears were rolling down his cheeks. Said he: "If I meet you in glory, I've got to turn around. I have come to ask you to pray with me." With a joyous heart the bishop got down on his knees and prayed with that man, and pointed him to Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That man had the right spirit and the right attitude toward his soul's salvation. He dared not wait until morning, for fear that with the night should go the drawing of the Holy Spirit which he felt had come to him from heaven. Some of you stand at that place. God's Spirit has called you again and again, and at this hour you feel that you ought to be Christians. Don't let anything keep you back, but decide, this very moment, "This one thing I do."

Of some of you who have been so strangely

moved toward heaven recently, I have grave fears that if you fail to come into the kingdom of God now you will be forever defeated. Dr. John Watson says that years ago on a summer afternoon he stood on a little harbor-wall and saw two vessels trying to make the entrance. They were in a narrow channel, and, since there was not water enough to keep them up, were lying on their sides. But far out the tide had begun to turn. One wave after another passed under them until soon the water was twelve feet deep in the harbor and the green foaming billows rushed in like a mill-race. He looked again toward the narrow passage. On one vessel they had taken advantage of the wind at the right moment, and floated in on the full tide; on the other vessel they were not on the alert, and when they tried to make the harbor the tide had turned and they could not. The water grew more shallow, they gave up the attempt, and gradually the vessel heeled over and lay just as before on the bank of sand. At nightfall he went down again, and in the gathering darkness, as he saw the forsaken vessel, he prayed that he might not miss the tide which God gives to our souls, nor quench his Spirit within his

heart. I offer the same prayer for you. The tide is running in, and if you will you may be saved; but, if you are neglectful, for some of you the tide will swiftly turn and you may be stranded for eternity.

Do not imagine that anything short of the open confession and frank surrender of your will to Christ can possibly bring you into the harbor of safety. Some of you have gone as far as the young man about whom we were speaking a moment ago; you, as he, have turned to Christ in prayer; but unless you make an open surrender of yourself to him, he will still say to you, and continue to say it at the judgment-seat, "One thing thou lackest." In the name of your Saviour I appeal to you to remedy that lack by the new purpose, "One thing I do."

If you do that, you will know the joy and the gladness suggested in our third Christian certainty, "One thing I know." A blind man to whom Christ had given sight said this. There was great excitement in the town as to who had healed the man and concerning the character of Jesus. They even went so far as to declare that the man had never been blind. But when his father and mother were called they said he was their son, and

had been born blind, but he would have to speak for himself as to how he had come to have his sight. Then the enemies of Jesus urged him to give the praise to God, instead of to Christ; for, they said, "We know that this man is a sinner." Then the blind man answered: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Thank God, this is a religion that a man may test. There are many now who in a spiritual way can bear the same testimony as did this man concerning the opening of his eyes. One thing we know, that whereas once sin blinded our eyes and burdened our hearts and filled our consciences with reproof, Jesus Christ has taken it all away. This is not a matter of theory, but a matter of experience. Men who were once the slaves of strong drink are now sober, and the power of the appetite is broken. One thing they know, that whereas they were once the slaves of that wicked habit, Christ has set them free. Men who were once profane and prayerless are now reverent in heart; prayer is their natural atmosphere and songs of love and confidence in Christ rise spontaneously to their lips. One thing they know, that their irreverence

has changed to adoration and love. Those who once cared for nothing but the pleasures and follies of life now find that to do good for Christ's sake, to lift the burdens from the shoulders of the weak, to dry the tears of the sorrowing, gives them infinitely more joy than they ever knew in the old life. One thing they know, that giddiness and folly have changed in them to loving devotion to Christ and their fellow-men. So I might go on through all the phases of human life and call witnesses to testify to the transformations which have come in their experience. I do not call you to a life of theorizing, but to a life of experience. The psalmist says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Do not worry about things you do not understand. Christ foresaw that some people would do that, and hence he said for their benefit: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Obey Christ, and sufficient light will fall upon your path for all your needs. If you obey him you shall have the witness of the Spirit, agreeing with your spirit, that you no longer belong to the kingdom of evil, but are a child of God, a fellow-heir with Jesus.

CHRIST THE PARDON-BRINGER.

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."—*Mark* ii. 10.

THESE words are connected with one of the most interesting stories in the life of Jesus. A man who was sick of the palsy had four friends who, knowing of the wonderful works of Christ in the healing of disease, determined to give their helpless friend the benefit of his treatment. We do not know how much difficulty they had to persuade him to make the attempt, but it is likely that a man suffering from the palsy would not be very hard to persuade to try a new doctor who made no charge for his cures and the fame of whose deeds was on everybody's tongue. It is quite probable that these men had themselves been healed by Christ, and in their joy at their renewed strength they thought of their friend lying helpless, and agreed that he, too, should

have the advantage of the wonderful power of Christ. When we think of the remarkable faith and energy which they showed later, it is easy to believe that there was some personal experience of this kind behind their confidence.

The sick man was so utterly helpless that the only way to bring him to Christ was for one man to take each corner of the bed; and thus they came carrying him through the street. When they came to the place where Christ was, they found not only the house full, but the street as well, and it was impossible for them to get even as far as the door. So they got the man to the top of the house, and opened the roof and let down the bed with the sick man on it at the very feet of Jesus. The record says that "when Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

There were in the crowd a number of critical people who were watching to pick flaws in Jesus, and find some reason to accuse a man who was becoming so suddenly famous. These people immediately put their heads together and said: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus, perceiving their attitude to-

ward him, said to them, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

I wish we could get groups of fours who would join together in uniting their influence in bringing their friends to Christ. Mr. Moody says that such a combination of influence will nearly always win a man to the Lord. And it seems reasonable. Suppose a man when he gets up in the morning should hear his wife saying to him in tearful earnestness, "Dear, I am greatly concerned about your soul." When he goes down-stairs, his daughter meets him and tells him she is praying for his conversion. After breakfast, his son follows him to the door and says, "Papa, I do wish you were a Christian." When he gets to his private office, one of his most trusted business asso-

ciates calls on him and asks him to yield to God. "That man," says Mr. Moody, "would probably surrender that day."

But it is not this interesting story nor the important suggestion about our own soul-winning to which I wish particularly to call your attention at this time, but rather to emphasize the great central fact that Jesus Christ is the Pardon-Bringer from God to this world, and that he still "has power on earth to forgive sins." No matter how the message comes to men, if they get it into their hearts that Christ has power to save them, and turn to him with penitence and faith, the divine pardon is always sure. There is in New York a Bible which changed the wicked and heathen Pitcairn Islanders to peaceable and sweet-natured Christians. A vagabond and an outcast, by name John Adams, fleeing from the English government because of his crimes, had among the neglected things at the bottom of his trunk a Bible which his Christian mother had given him when he was a boy. He had not looked at it for thirty years; but one day he brought it out, and as a matter of curiosity began to read it aloud to some of the natives. The Holy Book changed his life and theirs. A few months later the island was found by a

Nantucket whaler, and since that time it has been frequently visited. Through that forgotten Bible, which brought the mercy and pardon of Jesus Christ, it is to-day a happy Christian community.

All the fitness Jesus requires of those who desire the forgiveness of their sins is what he required of the sick whom he healed — that they shall feel their need of him. "A broken and a contrite heart" never fails in its plea at the feet of Christ. Such a heart as had Job when he said: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Or as David had when he said: "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." A heart like that which throbbed in Ezra's breast when he said: "I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God." The young Isaiah had this same contrition of spirit when he said: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." The publican who met the approval of Jesus had such a heart — he who

smote upon his breast and said: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And if you feel that you are a sinner against God, you need not wait to try to make yourself more presentable at the mercy seat. That very consciousness of your great need is your strongest appeal, and if you will come as you are, Christ will at once receive you, as he did the man sick of the palsy, and say: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

We cannot purchase our salvation by good works. It is characteristic of all the highest and holiest things that they cannot be purchased by money, or indeed in any other way. The best things cannot be bought, for they are never for sale. True friendship, genuine love, inspiring hope, courageous faith — none of these things are in the market. Hence we have to take salvation as a free gift of God, and the only return we can make is our love and our service given in the spirit of love and because we love him.

There was a ripple of excitement, not long ago, in an orphan asylum, because a beautiful and wealthy woman had come in her carriage to take away one of the inmates, a little girl named Jane, whom she had adopted as her daughter. Jane herself was bewildered with

the thought. The kind matron led her down the wide stairway, and as she passed the hall door she saw the shining carriage, the fine horses, the liveried servants, and it seemed like a dream.

"I hope she is glad to go," said the great lady, in a gentle tone. "Do you want to go home with me and be my child, my dear?"

"I don't know," said Jane, timidly.

"But I am going to give you beautiful clothes, and a gold ring, and a box of candy, and books, and dolls, and blocks, and a swing. Now do you want to go?"

"I don't know," said the child, still frightened.

"You shall have a little room of your own, with a beautiful bed, and table, and chair; you shall have a bird in a cage, and a little dog with a silver collar. Don't you want to go with me, Jane?"

There was a moment's silence, and then the little one said anxiously: "But what am I to do for all this?"

The lady burst into tears. "Only to love me and be my child," she said, and in a moment their arms were around each other.

All the wealth of the universe belongs to God; our lives are in his hand. We cannot pay him for salvation. He finds us poor

orphans, defiled by our sins, and he takes us into his own family and gives us the name of Christ as a badge of glory, not only forgiving all our past offences, but dwelling in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, comforting us in all the trials of life, and inspiring us with the hope of an inheritance incorruptible and full of glory. And all that it is possible for us to do in return is to give him our love and openly confess that love and gratitude before all the world. How strange it is that we should ever hesitate for a moment when asked to do that! If hitherto, not seeing it in its proper light, and not recognizing in Jesus the "altogether lovely" being he is, you have withheld from him the affection which his love merits and the open confession which alone can be worthy of you, I appeal to you now to change your neglect and refusal into a willing surrender of your heart and life to him.

There is a very pretty story told of how Henry M. Stanley wooed and won Miss Dorothy Tennant. Miss Tennant, it is well-known, was the original of Sir John Millais's famous picture, "Yes or No?" On Stanley's return as the founder of the Congo State, he met Miss Tennant, became very deeply attached to her, and asked her to be his wife; but the reply was, "No."

He went to Africa again, and was gone for several years on his tour in search of Emin Pasha. When he returned to London he was for the time the most famous man of his day. The thought of Miss Tennant was still uppermost in his mind, and he resolved that his first visit should be to her home. In his impatience for the morrow, when he could call, he turned over the cards and notes of invitation with which the table was strewn, and selecting one haphazard, decided to while away the time by attending a certain reception. The first person he met there was Miss Tennant. They greeted each other formally, but later in the evening Stanley retired to a small anteroom, only to find that Miss Tennant had likewise sought solitude. A somewhat embarrassing silence ensued, broken at last by the woman saying with the manner of one "making conversation":

"Do you find London much changed, Mr. Stanley?"

"No; I haven't found London changed, and I have not changed, either," returned the explorer, with his usual courage. "Have you changed?"

"Yes; I've changed," answered Miss Tennant, softly.

A few days later Millais, who had long before painted her into his famous picture, received a note from his former subject, beginning: "My dear Sir John: The momentous question has been at last decided. It is a joyful and triumphant 'Yes!'"

Jesus Christ has been long wooing your soul; he speaks of himself often as the Bridegroom, to express the tenderness which he feels for us and the love with which he seeks to win us. And you have turned away from his love, and have grieved his heart, and refused him again and again. I pray that the Holy Spirit may now cause you to so see him in all his wondrous beauty and glory that you shall change from your attitude of neglect and refusal and give to your divine Lord a joyful and triumphant acceptance!

Do not, I beg of you, wait for some overwhelming tide of feeling that will break down your power to resist. It may never come to you. God has given you your will and your power of choice, and you ought to choose to stand on the Lord's side because it is the right side and it is your duty to be there, and because your safety and happiness and peace for time and eternity depend upon

your being there. How weak it seems, when there is so much at stake, when your eternal destiny may hang upon your decision, for you still to say, "I must wait till I feel more like it." It is not feeling that you need, but decision, and every hour you neglect your duty makes it harder to decide to do it.

Dr. George C. Wilding, now of Jersey City, told me that he once went to speak to two young ladies who were standing together, while others were pressing forward to the altar to seek Christ. He earnestly pleaded with them to accept Jesus. One of them yielded at once, and, as she started, said: "I cannot possibly stay away from Christ any longer." The other girl, looking after her as she went, turned to Dr. Wilding, and said, with a look of decision in her face: "I could stay away from Christ, but I *must not*." And she, too, went down the aisle and bowed at the mercy seat beside her friend. There are many of you who have that same feeling that you are able to resist the Spirit which draws you to Christ; but oh, my friend, you *must not* do it, at the peril of your eternal salvation! Choose Christ and his peace, with all that it means in this life and in the next, and it will be a glorious victory for your soul!

THE LORD OF PEACE.

"The Lord of peace himself give you peace always."—2 *Thess.* iii. 16.

Nothing in the world is so common as trouble. It is knocking at our doors early and late, from youth to old age. It is a world full of strife, full of unrest, and multitudes go up and down the highways of life crying out in their anguish, or, like the man from the tombs in the country of the Gadarenes, go raving in the wildness of their despair. The secret of the trouble of the world is sin. Not that all men who have trouble to-day have it because of their own sin: but sin has demoralized the world; it has sown the seeds of disease and pain and strife and war and crime of every sort in the fertile fields of the human heart.

Strange it is that while all the world seems so full of unrest and trouble everybody is

seeking after peace. The men who are the most reckless in their sins are also planning and scheming how they may find peace. The man who drinks the baleful glass which is destroying all possibilities of happiness in his life is often trying to drown his conscience and his sorrow and thus find peace. Many a man whips himself over the track in a wild race for wealth, stopping not at dishonesty and wickedness to attain his end, because he imagines that in wealth there is peace.

There is only one Lord of peace, and that is Jesus Christ our Saviour. He who spake to the troubled waves of the little Sea of Galilee, "Peace, be still!" and there was a great calm, is the only one who is able to speak to the troubled waves of the human soul and bring peace out of its chaotic turmoil.

It is impossible that a sinful soul should have peace. The striking illustrations that are used in the Bible to make clear the character of sin and its effects make it very plain that there can be no peace without sin being cast out. It is said of Cain that sin made him a vagabond on the earth. A vagabond cannot have peace. He is an outcast; fears pursue him from behind; danger and starvation threaten him in the future; memories of hap-

pier days rise up to distress him. The vagabond is in the very nature of things restless and uneasy and beyond the possibility of peace. If we could gather all the vagabonds of sin here to-night,— but, alas! there is no church or hall that would hold them,— every one that was honest would testify that when sin drove him out from innocency and from communion with God and put its brand of evil habit upon him, and he became a vagabond from purity of life and purpose, peace forsook him. There may have been hours of revel and debauch; hours of stupor and indifference; hours of recklessness and presumption; but among them all not one single hour of peace.

David compares sin to a fire in his bones; there is no peace in a lawless fire, whether it be ravaging on a dwelling, or a storehouse, or in the heart of a man. It means disorder and pain and anguish. Sin is a fire which, unless quenched by the Lord of peace, will burn forever. The story is told of McCheyne, the famous Scotch preacher, that on one of his evangelistic tours through the Highlands of Scotland, after preaching one Sunday morning, he rode on several miles to a small town, hoping to have an opportunity to arouse the

people to earnestness and pluck some souls as brands from the burning. Arriving in the little town, he went to the house of the only minister, and asked if he might preach for him at the afternoon service, but was told that there would be no more services that day, and that the people were widely scattered through the country.

"Will you not summon them to hear me preach by ringing the bell?" McCheyne asked.

"If you were to do that," the minister answered, "they would think there was a fire."

"But it is a case of fire," said McCheyne, gravely; "the fire that is never quenched."

The astonished preacher rang the bell, and the people gathered from all over the country in haste, and that man on fire with the Holy Spirit spoke to them of the danger of the fire of sin, as though a live coal from God's altar had touched his lips.

On another occasion, McCheyne was riding along the road on horseback when he came to a blacksmith's forge. He pulled in his horse, alighted, and went up to the blacksmith, who was using his bellows to fan the flame, and said solemnly: "What does that fire remind you of?" Without saying another word he re-

mounted his horse and rode away, but it was the arrow of God that went straight to the heart of the blacksmith and aroused him to great conviction of sin which led to his salvation. So I urge upon you that sin is not to be tampered with; it is a fire burning at the very heart of life.

In the prophecy of Isaiah sin is compared to mire and dirt which the sea is forever casting up, showing that peace is impossible so long as the sin is there. "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." The ocean cannot rest because it is at the mercy of the winds and may be lashed into fury by a storm sweeping over its surface at any time. It is like that with the man or woman who depends upon outward circumstances for peace. While all things are propitious they may have much joy and gladness, but a storm is likely to sweep over their sea at any time, and then, if they have no other source of happiness, they are the most wretched of beings.

I knew two merchants who lived side by

side on the same street. For many years they had both been prosperous men — had made money, had a good position in the business world, stood well socially, were happily married, and had pleasant families of children. Suddenly, in the stringency of hard times which almost came to be a panic, both of these men lost very largely, and it was evident that their fortunes had taken wings and flown away. At fifty years of age they must start in again.

One of them was a Christian, and the other was not. The man who was not a Christian came home in the evening and went up-stairs as if to dress for dinner. When he did not return, his daughter went to call him, and found him dying the death of a suicide from poison he had swallowed. What tongue could ever describe the sorrow and anguish and unrest that drove that poor man from the tortures of earth to the tortures of eternal remorse, or describe the distress left behind him among those who loved him so dearly?

The Christian merchant was obliged to give up his great store, and his family moved out of their fine house; but his manhood was all left. He took a place as a clerk in another store, and rented a small house. His Christian wife and children loyally gathered around

him. He was in his place in church the same as ever; his testimony in the prayer-meeting expressed, if anything, a little more sweetness, and there was more comfort in it than ever to the listeners who knew the brave struggle he was making and saw the peace of God in his face.

That is the contrast between the soul which depends on circumstances for its peace and the one relying on him who is Lord of peace and over whom circumstances have no control. As some one has said, it makes a vast difference into what well we let down our bucket. If it is the well of worldliness, no matter how abundant it may seem in days of prosperity, it is likely at any time to go dry; but if we draw out of the wells of salvation, there will be plenty of water all the year round and abundance for all the seasons of human life. And as the well on the mountain-side seems to give forth water more cool and refreshing on the summer day, when the heat parches the surface of the earth most and makes the stagnant pools that lie in the sun lukewarm and distasteful, so the water from the wells of salvation is more than ever refreshing and satisfying in those experiences which try men's souls.

The secret of a peace which never changes is a communion and fellowship with him who is the Lord of peace. We cannot fail to have peace if we rest ourselves in his arms, and know that our lives are pleasing to him. Cold as it has been these last few days, if at any time you had held the bulb of a thermometer in your hand until it became warm, you would have seen the mercury shoot up to summer heat. Worldliness and sin freeze the heart, but if we give our hearts into the keeping of Christ our Saviour, the warmth of that heavenly climate in which he dwells will come with its own sunshine and summer into our souls.

The ocean cannot rest not only because of wind and storm, but also because the mire and clay and the multitude of things forever drifting into it are always being cast up. A sinful soul is like that. Memory will not let the sinner rest. He may forget for a time, as the ocean is sometimes peaceful and quiet and its waters clear; but the tide is likely at any time to bring up the mire and the clay from the depths. So long as there is sin in one's heart, God may cast it up at any moment. As Frederick Robertson says, this is the misery of remorse — the worst torment of man's stormy mind. For after a while, when the body which some-

times now causes us to forget the sins of the soul shall pass away, there will begin the eternity of a hell of recollection — when every act of bygone guilt which has not been sunk in the blood of Christ shall be as fresh and vivid before a sinner's eyes as it was at the moment when it was committed.

The Lord of peace proposes to give us peace by taking the mire and dirt of sin out of our hearts. A clean heart may have peace. John Ruskin says: "Make yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts." A man can have no such nesting-place in his heart if he is conscious that he is a sinner. From such a heart there must always come up thoughts that are like ghosts which frighten their victim out of all possibility of peace. But a Christian heart that has pleasant memories of God's great goodness, of his sweet loving-kindness, that treasures up happy recollections of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, and of self-sacrificing fellowship with him, is a nesting-place of thoughts and meditations that are ever happy and full of peace.

We may be absolutely certain that in all worlds sin and sorrow must in the long run be joined together. The wicked soul cannot have peace. Some of you to whom I speak

have no peace because of your sins. Pleasure you have sometimes, but deep, abiding peace, in which the soul nestles in perfect repose, which thinks upon death and eternity with composure and courage and joy — of that you know nothing, and can know nothing until your sins are blotted out and the Lord of peace has healed your unrest. Thank God, you may know that peace, and you may know it now! Zacchæus had no peace until Christ came to visit him, but that very hour salvation came to his house. The poor demoniac had no peace till he met Christ, but then he sat clothed and in his right mind. The disciples on the storm-tossed sea had no peace until Jesus came, and then all was calm. The same Lord of peace is here, ready to speak peace to your soul, ready to bid hate and anger and lust and evil appetite and sinful desires begone, as he cast out the devils from the tormented souls in the days of his earthly life. He is ready to speak peace to every warring element in your heart — to say to your doubts and fears, "Peace, be still." What shall be your answer to-night? Shall it be peace, or no?

THE KEEPING CHRIST.

"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."—2 *Thess.* iii. 3.

In the defence of a fortress a great deal depends upon the sentinel. If the sentinel is treacherous, and at heart an enemy, he may be able to give over the entire fortress into the hands of the foe. If he is indifferent and careless, he may sleep on guard or be otherwise so negligent that the result will be as bad as if he were treacherous in purpose. A weak man, who can be easily deceived or imposed upon, may also prove fatal to the safety of the garrison. A fortress situated in an enemy's country sleeps in peace only when the sentinels are trusted men, men who are alert, intelligent and experienced, and whose fidelity can be relied upon. It is a picture like that which Paul presents to us here. He writes to these Thessalonians that Christ is a

faithful sentinel who will keep guard over them with sleepless vigilance, and protect them from all evil. It is a very striking picture, I think, and one that certainly appeals to the condition in which we find ourselves in this world. It enlarges, too, our conception of Jesus Christ, if we have been thinking of him only, or in most part, as the One who came to bear our sins in his own body on the cross and to open up a divine way for our salvation. It is comforting to think of him also as the One who has conquered death, who has come off triumphant over the grave, and is living to-day to keep faithful watch over the hearts of those who have accepted his offer of salvation.

It is a very common thing for people who are deeply convicted of sin, and are moved upon by the Holy Spirit to accept Christ, to give as an excuse for neglecting to render him obedience and open confession the danger of not being able to live up to the profession they would make. To any such there is here a message of peculiar interest; for the same Christ who died to redeem you, and who stands knocking at the door of your heart, desiring to enter in as your friend and Saviour, is presented by Paul, who had tested

him so thoroughly, as one who will stablish you in every good way, who will not only start you on the way heavenward with a clean heart and a right spirit, but will keep you from evil. And this which Paul has said of Christ, all sincere Christians know to be true. I venture the assertion that there does not live on the earth to-day a man who was once a genuine Christian, who has fallen back into sin, who is both intelligent and honest, who will not confess that the cause of his falling was the taking of his life out of the hand of Christ, his refusing to yield his heart to be governed by the Saviour. Of course a man does not lose his free will by becoming a Christian. He still has the power to choose, and it is as possible for him to turn Christ out of his heart as it is for you to turn your best friend out of your home and grieve the one who loves you most. Every honest backslider will admit that so long as he trusted Christ and obeyed him he did keep him from evil, and that it was only when, by wilful sin, or by wilful neglect of prayer and trust in Christ, he grieved away the Saviour, that he lost the experience of his divine presence.

Christ keeps us by taking possession of the central fortress of a human life, the heart,

where imaginations and purposes are formed, filling it with good thoughts and holy purposes so that there is no room left for the old schemings and plottings of evil. This a man often leaves out of account when balancing the possibilities of his living a Christian life. A man says: "My thoughts and imaginations are not only not Christian, but are often decidedly unchristian. I have many good impulses, and fondly imagine I am going to do right, but the first thing I know I am caught in the grip of some strong temptation to do wrong, and all my resolutions go for naught." A man fails to recognize, when he talks like that, that the moment he surrenders his will to Christ a new power comes upon the throne of his life. It is not a negative life to which I call you. I am not asking you simply to make a new resolution not to do wrong, that would, no doubt, be as hopeless as a thousand others you have broken. I am asking something very different. It is that you shall invite the Lord Jesus Christ to come into your heart with the cleansing power of his presence. You have felt many times the power of the presence of some people to smother out bad thoughts in you. Many a young man who has gone into sinful indulgences would

never go there again if in order to go his pure mother must go with him. You have seen people the very atmosphere about whom was so positively and strongly good that when you were with them in close association it seemed as though anything that was good would be easy to perform, and low and groveling thoughts were never so vulgar and hateful to you as when you were with them. Sometimes you say within yourself: "If I could only live in intimate association with such pure souls, goodness would be as natural as the air I breathe, and I could overcome all my sins." Now, the truth is that what you have felt in these saintly souls is only a faint reflection of what you would feel if you were to come into close fellowship with Jesus Christ himself. The moment you yield your heart to him in obedience, according to his promise he will come into your heart and into your life, and will give you holy thoughts and noble desires and good purposes.

The Lord keeps our hearts from evil not by keeping us always standing on monotonous guard duty for fear we will do wrong. If that were all, it would be an awful drudgery. But he thrusts us out into the doing of positively good things, on a career of usefulness in fel-

lowship with himself, and makes all our common life seem sacred and hallowed with the beauty of his presence. The kind deed we do for the weak we do in his name; and there is a new joy in it when we feel that, whatever lack of gratitude there may be in the one for whom we do the kindly act, the glorious Christ receives the service at our hands as though we did it for him personally. In the doing of good things we are established and strengthened and made to rejoice. The useful life is always the happy life. To know that we gladden others, that we are living such lives that if people follow our example they are not led astray, but are conducted safely toward heaven, is in itself a wonderfully comforting thing. Christ puts us forward — not only ministers, but the newest convert — as his representatives, and to feel that in the smallest way we are standing in Jesus' stead to win men away from their sorrows and their sins, and lead them toward new courage and strength and heaven, is a marvelous help in keeping us from evil.

Christ keeps us from evil associations, or, if duty calls us into them, he gives us the inner power to resist them. He keeps us from forming evil associations for our own pleasure,

because we no longer have pleasure in those things that we feel would be displeasing to Christ. People before they become Christians often think a great deal, and some talk a great deal, about the things they would have to give up in order to be open and consistent disciples of Jesus Christ; but I have never heard of an earnest and sincere soul who after having given the whole heart up to Christ in love and devotion had any such trouble. Christ doesn't ask us to give up anything that gives us joy and pleasure unless it is something that harms us, or harms our neighbors; and when we love Christ and have the happiness of knowing that he loves us, we no longer desire to do anything that will grieve him. We all know what this means in common life; Every one of us has friends who are so dear, and whose happiness we hold so jealously, that we often change our conduct because of their pleasure? And we do not think it a hard thing to do, because the knowledge of giving pleasure to one we love changes our very desire and purpose. You have only to lift that up into the higher sphere to see that when we have given our hearts to Christ, and he has forgiven our sins, and wrapped us about with his love, nothing could be more bitter to us

than to do the things that would grieve him or bring reproach on his name.

Christ keeps us by the presence of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts and who shines upon the Bible and makes it an altogether different book to us. It is impossible that an unconverted man or woman should think about or enjoy reading the Bible as does one who has given his heart to Christ and looks upon it as the treasure store of information concerning his Heavenly Father and his Saviour. Perhaps some of you say: "I have never had any pleasure in reading the Bible; it is not an interesting book to me, and I don't see how it could be of any help in this rugged every-day life of mine in keeping me from evil." But when once you have turned away from your sins and surrendered your will to God, the Holy Spirit will make the Bible the sweetest book in the world to you. I think a little reflection will make this seem very natural. Here is a man who has no fancy for legal papers; the formalities and rather stiff rhetoric of such documents are repulsive to him; and he says: "I don't see how a man could be a lawyer and willing to spend his time reading wills and things of that sort." But some day a man comes along and tells him that a

will has just been offered for probate in which he is named as an heir to a great inheritance; that the sum which is coming to him is large enough to set him free from his poverty and give him all the enjoyment of riches. Do you not think that all his repugnance to wills and legal documents would vanish in a moment? The phraseology of the will which granted him his inheritance would become to him the most interesting bit of literature in the world. The reason is that his personal attitude is entirely changed. He is an heir, and it is under this will that the property is described and guaranteed. Have you ever thought what those words mean — the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament?* And have you compared them with the phraseology of wills in conveying inheritances? In a will a man usually writes of it as his "last will and *testament.*" So the Bible, Old and New, is God's will toward us. It tells all about the story of our family; it tells of its riches, of its sins, of its sorrows, of its bankruptcy and poverty; but, thank God! it tells us also of him who came to redeem us and bring us back again to the wealth and glory of heaven.

The moment you give your heart to Christ you become an heir to treasures of immortal

value under conditions set forth in these Testaments of God. How sweet to your heart all the promises of that Book will then be, and what power they will have to keep you in comfort and in peace! Listen to some of them: "All things work together for good to them that love God." "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

The more you read this Holy Word with this new sense of ownership in it, the more you will be drawn out in prayer and conversation with Christ, until you will become conscious constantly that the presence of Christ

abides in your heart and in your life. You will feel that he is never far from you, but is more real to you and more surely present than any other friend. Oh, my friend, he is able *to keep you.* All about you are men and women who can bear testimony to the power of Christ to keep. He has rescued many of them from the power of wicked habits; has cleansed them from impure imaginations; has taken their feet from wicked ways; has brought them up on to the Highway of Holiness, and though lions may sometimes have growled along the path, no ravenous beast has ever met them on that holy way.

But have you reflected that you who are so fearful about being kept after you become Christians are entirely unprotected now? Every day you live in sin the sentence of God's broken law hangs over your head. A man does not have to wait until the judgment to be condemned. If he is an unpardoned sinner, he is condemned now. Is it not strange for you, about whose head every dart of evil is hurled, with no shield to ward them off, with no armor to protect you, to allow the devil to deceive you into doubting Christ's power to keep you and save you? Christ never yet broke his word with a human

soul, and if you will trust him, you will be able to say with Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

THE HEROIC CHRIST.

"The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us."—*Isa.* xxxiii. 21, 22.

THIS is a picture, seen in prophetic vision, of the triumph that Jesus Christ is to have in the world. The campaign which is to end in that victory is now on, and we have our part in it. It presents Christ to us as "the glorious Lord," and predicts that he shall go on "conquering and to conquer" until no slave-ship shall be left in the world, for that is what is meant by a "galley with oars." And what is still more startling, it is boldly predicted that the time shall come when he shall have driven all the "gallant ships"—that is, the war-vessels of the world — off the seas.

There is something splendid in the audacity

and daring of these prophecies concerning Christ, which was fully borne out by his own attitude while on earth, and the progress of his influence in the world in the nearly two thousand years that have passed since his death and resurrection. The world is fond of heroes, and Christ is its greatest hero. Heroism of the highest sort demands the giving up of one's own personal comfort and ease — indeed, the risking of one's whole personality —for a high and worthy purpose. We have just been witnessing in this country an illustration of hero-worship with that sort of a basis. The crowds have flocked to see Nansen, the arctic explorer, not simply because he had gone farther north than any one else, but because of the innate heroism of the man in giving himself up to an idea. One cannot read Nansen's books without feeling that in all those years of drifting through the ice-seas of the arctic he would much rather have died than that his theory should prove to be false. He was never thinking about freezing, or moaning over his own sufferings, or worrying about dying; his whole thought was on the success or the failure of the expedition. His great anxiety was that his theory should be proved correct. The supreme aim and ob-

ject of his life for the time being was entirely outside of himself. It is this rising above the personal attitude into the nobler struggle for the benefit of the race that makes the hero.

Nansen is an illustration, living and vital, of the fact that all the great things that are done in the world are accomplished by faith. Though not especially in this matter a hero of "*the* faith," this viking explorer is as much a hero of faith as Abraham was. On his faith in his theory concerning the arctic currents he risked everything that was dear to him in the world. He committed himself absolutely to the faith that if his ship was once locked in polar ice, it would drift for a while toward the pole, and afterward away from it, into open waters. He burned every bridge of safety behind him when he gave himself up, absolutely, to his great faith. The world crowns him a hero because he counted his life not dear unto himself when his faith was at stake.

Christ is the matchless hero of humanity. Nansen had the scientists of the world largely against him, but Christ had all the world against him. All men's sins, all their prejudices, all the trend of wicked habits, all respectability, all government, all the world

frowned on him. Herod sought him in his babyhood with a bloody sword. The very church to which he came to bring larger light hunted him with bitter cruelty to the death. And yet this Nazarene peasant with no human power to back him, with no government on his side, with no newspapers to extend his views, with no friends except the poor and despised, deliberately set himself to fulfill this prophecy and others like it.

We want to catch this spirit of Christ. We are not in the world as the disciples of Jesus to stand abashed before or make compromises with any evil thing. The Christian church has been so slow in making progress throughout the world simply because so many of its members, and often its leaders, have left the sublime and heroic faith of their glorious Lord. If a thing is evil it is doomed in this world. All slavery is to cease on the earth. No "galley with oars" is to be left to run its piratical way. We are easily scared by a great show of physical force, but that is only because we lack faith in Christ and fail to appreciate the power of ideas to break down and disintegrate physical forces. There never was a period in the history of African slavery when it was so boastful, or so confident of

wider dominion, as it was less than ten years before the Emancipation Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln. It was intrenched in wealth; intrenched in State and national government; intrenched everywhere but in righteousness. But steadily there grew up in the hearts of men a feeling that it was wrong, and this conviction deepened and gathered force until slavery was smitten to the death.

Every other evil thing that is hurtful to mankind and which brings humanity into bondage will go down before the widening sway of Jesus Christ. We have been having an ebb-tide in the war against the liquor traffic, and for the last few years the liquor influence has been stronger in politics and in government and more intrenched in wealth than ever before. Many earnest Christian people who see clearly the despoiling of human life by this vile traffic, and whose ears are keen to hear the heartbreaking moans that come up from desolate homes and blighted lives, have been, and are, greatly discouraged. But we have no reason to be discouraged. Lincoln once said about slavery, "If slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong." So I say that all distinction be-

tween right and wrong is but the babbling idiocy of a fool unless the liquor traffic is wrong. Being wrong, it is doomed; and up from this ebb-tide we shall see, in days that are near, the coming in of a wave for temperance and righteousness that will carry us far beyond anything the world has yet seen. What we need is the spirit of Christ — the heroic spirit that will not crouch and cower before any evil because it has wealth and popularity or numbers on its side. Any man who is right, however humble he may seem, need never fear to plant his fist straight between the eyes of anything that is evil, however monstrous and giant-like it may appear.

Christ has set out to capture this world. Its desert places are to have broad rivers; its dry and parched uplands are to abound in springs and living streams. Already the human deserts of the world in the great lands of China, and India, and Africa are beginning to be touched by these living fountains, and it shall go on until the whole world of humanity is refreshed and saved by our Christ.

All this seems possible to us when we are ourselves alive to the presence of Christ in our own hearts and personally engaged in bringing about the salvation of others at our own door.

If we lose the fire of divine life out of our own hearts it is easy to doubt the supernatural character of our gospel and its power to save the heathen.

In New South Wales there was an old local preacher who had apparently outlived his usefulness. He had lost the enthusiasm and fervor of his devotion to Christ. The superintendent of the circuit at last went to interview the old man, when the following conversation ensued:

"My brother, I wish you could see your way to retire from the plan."

"How's that, sir?" asked the old man, in unfeigned surprise.

"So many complaints reach me," said the superintendent, "that I fear I shall not be able to give you any more appointments." And then, after an embarrassing pause, he added: "Do you know what they call you, through the circuit?"

"No, sir," tremulously answered the old man.

"They — call — you — old — Brother — Dry — Stick," slowly and with difficulty answered the superintendent.

For a few moments the old man was like one paralyzed. Then, with tears raining down his furrowed cheeks, he pleaded to be

allowed to preach "just once more." The concession was granted.

Away to his little room went that dry-as-dust old preacher. He wept and pleaded with God. He went again and again. Like Jacob at the Jabbok ford, he wrestled with God until his heart was strangely refreshed by the messenger from heaven.

Still trembling and anxious, he went off to that strangest of trial sermons. The people who had come expecting to sleep or to be bored soon found that they had reckoned without their host. One after another they looked at the old man and then at each other with amazement. He seemed like a new being, and before long the audience was shaken with divine power. Tears took the place of criticism, and ere the service ended, sinning souls had sought and found forgiveness. It was so everywhere he went. "Old Dry Stick" became a flaming evangel throughout the country, and remained so until his translation.

It is like that in our faith concerning the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ. Show me a man whose heart is on fire with love for Christ, joyous because of his own salvation, and who is personally leading souls to Christ in his own neighborhood, and I will

show you one who finds it easy to believe that Christ can and will capture China and India for the banner of the cross.

It makes a great deal of difference in the carrying on of the church whether we do it with a painful sense of duty, as though we were carrying a burden, or in the heroic spirit of Jesus, finding it a joy because of the victory our faith sees in the end.

An eight-year-old child with a cut in her hand was brought to a physician. It was necessary for the best results to take a few stitches with a surgeon's needle. While the physician was making preparations the little girl swung her foot nervously against the chair, and was gently admonished by her mother.

"That will do no harm," said the doctor, kindly, "as long as you hold your hand still;" adding, with a glance at the strained, anxious face of the child: "You may cry as much as you like."

"I would rather sing," replied the child.

"All right; that would be better. What can you sing?"

"I can sing '"Give, give," said the little stream.' Do you know that?"

"I am not sure," responded the doctor. "How does it begin?"

The little patient proceeded to illustrate.

"That's beautiful," said the doctor. "I want to hear the whole of it."

All the while the skilled fingers were sewing up the wound the sweet, childish voice sounded bravely through the room, and the only tears shed on the occasion came from the eyes of the mother.

I wish we might all do our Christian work in the singing, heroic spirit instead of the whining spirit. How much better it would illustrate and bear testimony to the character of Christ!

Christ has made it very certain that in self-forgetfulness, while carrying good cheer to the poorest and most needy of our fellows, we come into closest fellowship with him, and may often thus, unconsciously, do heroic deeds for which we shall receive his applause in the day of final accounting.

A shoemaker whose name was Martin had a great longing to do some special service for Jesus Christ. One night, in a dream, he received the promise that the Saviour would visit him on the morrow. Martin's dwelling was a cellar, and his work-bench stood beside the low window, from which he saw nothing but the feet of those who passed by. He rose early in the morning, and at breakfast he said

with great joy to himself: "To-day the Lord Jesus will visit me." Looking up, he saw a pair of shabby feet wearily dragging themselves past his window. Full of pity, he went out and found a poor woman, hungry and homeless, who had wandered about the streets all night long, carrying a sick babe in her arms. Martin took her into his dwelling, gave her the remnant of his breakfast, and fed the child with milk. When she had gone he again sat down to work, hoping that now the Lord Jesus would soon appear. About noon he saw another pair of tired feet shuffling past. Hurrying out, Martin found an old man who had not tasted food that day. He invited him in and shared his dinner with the hungry guest. When he had gone, Martin thought sadly: "The day half spent, and the Lord Jesus has not yet come." Toward evening he saw more feet in violent movement, hurriedly flying hither and thither, and when he went out he found an old fruit-seller and a street-boy in a fierce fight. The woman clutched the sleeve of the boy's threadbare jacket and screamed: "He stole my apples, and I will beat him for it!" Martin made peace between them, and, finding that both were hungry, took them home and shared

with them his supper. The day being ended, he went to bed with a sad heart, for the Lord Jesus had not visited him, as it had been promised him in his dream. He slept, and again he dreamed. And behold, in his dream appeared first the tired woman and her sick child; she looked into his eyes and said: "Martin, dost thou know me?" And the old man came, and the fruit-seller, and the poor boy, each asking: "Martin, dost thou know me?" Then Martin understood, and he remembered the words of the Master: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

What a glorious thing it will be, when the privileges and opportunities of life are over and all earth's treasures shall have passed beyond our grasp, to have our glorious Lord call up before us ransomed and redeemed spirits from China and India and Africa and Japan, as well as from the slums of our own cities, and say to us, as with astonished eyes we gaze upon these whom we do not remember ever to have seen before, but to whom, when we could not go, we cheerfully gave our money to send the messenger: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

THE ANGEL IN THE GARDEN.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." — *Luke* xxii. 43.

The hours which Jesus spent in the Garden of Gethsemane on that fateful night of his arrest are overhung with mystery which will never lift for us until we are in that land of light where we shall know even as we are known. We can approach the scene only from the human side; but it is fraught with the greatest interest when viewed from that standpoint.

One of the most touching things connected with the evening's story is the illustration that is given us of the hunger of Jesus for human sympathy and fellowship. It stirs our hearts to the very depths as we see him coming again and again to tenderly and sadly arouse his sleeping friends to keep watch with him in his great agony. Nowhere does the tenderness of Jesus shine forth more beautifully

than in his gentle treatment of the disciples as they lift their sorrowful and shamed faces from their slumber as he speaks to them. We surely should find in this scene the assurance of Christ's personal joy in our devotion and service. It is still possible for us to watch with Jesus in alert and loving fidelity to his poor, whom he regards as his very self. Reflection on Christ's great sacrifice for us, as illustrated in the drops of bloody sweat that rolled from his brow that awful night in the garden, cannot but inspire in our hearts grateful love. A member of the Knights Templars in Chicago was recently told by his physician that he would surely die unless some of his friends would consent to sacrifice sections of their healthy skin that it might be grafted upon his body, and forty members of his lodge volunteered to give their own flesh and blood for the healing of their friend and brother. It is said that the patient was not only filled with gratitude to these men, but regards every one of them with the most loving affection, considering them the saviors of his life. How is it possible for us, who have received such testimonies of the affection and sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf, to rescue us from sin and despair,

to fail to pour out our love and gratitude at his feet?

An incident of exceeding interest is the appearance of the angel to strengthen our Lord in the great weakness and loneliness which came upon him in his agonizing struggle. Angels are very intimately connected with the story of Christ. It was an angel who announced to Mary the coming incarnation. It was an angel who sounded to the shepherds the first note of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and a great company of the same heavenly host who sang the anthem in the astonished ears of those who watched their flocks. Angels ministered to Jesus in the wilderness, after his forty days with the wild beasts and the temptations of Satan. It was an angel, also, who announced his resurrection to the women who came seeking him in the tomb; and angels were the comforters of the disciples when they gazed after his retreating form at his ascension. So it does not seem strange that in this hour of lonely agony one of these heavenly visitors who were so interested in his work of salvation should appear as his comforter. Surely there is no angel more interesting to us than this messenger of consolation to our Lord in this dark hour.

On a certain occasion, when Rev. J. Robertson had been preaching a series of sermons on "Angels in their Revealed Connection with the Work of Christ," Dr. Duncan came into the vestry and said: "Will you be so kind as to let me know when you are going to take up the case of my favorite angel?"

"But who is he, doctor?"

"Oh! Guess that."

"Well, it would not be difficult to enumerate all those whose names we have given us."

"But I can't tell you his name; he is an anonymous angel. It is the one who came down to Gethsemane and there strengthened my Lord to go through his agony for me, that he might go forward to the cross and finish my redemption there. I have an extraordinary love for that one, and I often wonder what I 'll say to him when I meet him first."

We have no reason for not believing the angels to be as much interested in us as they were in our Saviour. It is not a dumb, dead, material world; it is a world tremulous with eternal things, a world full of spiritual realities. Angels are looking on and taking an interest in our conduct. In our lonely hours of sorrow, when weakness comes upon us, and human fellowship seems to fail, as it did with Christ, we

may be sure that the angels of God are hovering near, ready to comfort us and strengthen us. In a world such as ours this is of infinite importance, for sorrow must be the common lot of all.

An Indian prince once sent Prince Bismarck a pair of strange doves, which came from a little island in the Pacific known as Blood Dove Island. These doves, on account of a blood-red mark on their breasts, are called "doves with bleeding hearts." There were many newspaper comments as to the propriety of such a gift to the stern old statesman who was known so long and so widely as the man of blood and iron. Whatever one may think about that, it is sure that the dove of peace in this world must still carry a bleeding heart, and every Christian will experience his hours of agony. In such a time only the consciousness which Christ had of the nearness of the spiritual world, and the certainty of heavenly association, can give strength to the soul.

Dr. George H. Hepworth tells how he was one day riding with a comrade through some of the grandest scenery on the face of the earth. They were toiling up the last spur of a mountain so high that the clouds would have

rested on its summit had there been any in the sky. They almost seemed to have left this little globe behind them and to be on their way to another world. Naturally they talked of that Great Beyond which was apparently not far distant. His comrade spoke freely of a loss he had suffered. A little child had been called from the family circle — had sped away in the night and gone where no human eye could follow her. With a broken heart, but still in somewhat stoical language, he referred to that vacant chair. "Gone! gone!" was his despairing exclamation. Dr. Hepworth listened to the story, and at its close quietly remarked: "Yes, gone, but not gone far! In the brighter land we will see her again." "If I could believe that," he said, after a little, "nine-tenths of the burden would be removed. But to feel that such farewells are forever, that is very hard;" and the strong man trembled with suppressed emotion, while tears made it impossible to continue the conversation.

Of how little worth is anything in this world, if this world is all! The world gets its value from our faith that its atmosphere is full of angels; that there is a shining stairway that leads up to God, and another world where all that is good of this shall be harvested.

Surely it is true that "if love can die, then love is only prolonged agony; but the conviction that love can never die strengthens, broadens and ennobles the soul."

Perhaps I speak to some who are now confronting such an hour of struggle. The very air you breathe seems to be full of enemies and your progress is contested at every point. But you need not fear so long as you maintain your faith in God, and are conscious of the presence of his angels, who in answer to your prayer nerve your arm to renewed strength. To all human eyes the odds may seem to be greatly against you, but with the hosts of God on your side, you are certain to win. He who surrounded Elisha at Dothan with a mountain full of chariots of fire, is able to strengthen you in any battle that is in your path, and to aid you in cutting your way through all opposition.

Just how one comes into this consciousness of communion and fellowship with the spiritual world peopled with God's angels no one can ever adequately describe in human language. It is the miracle of simple faith and childlike confidence and prayer. One of the most remarkable surgical cases on record was witnessed recently in Cleveland, Ohio.

A little girl about five years old, while romping on the floor, accidentally ran a needle into her right knee-joint. In attempting to pull it out, the father broke off the bit of steel, leaving more than half of it embedded in the flesh, and when she was taken to the doctor, repeated probing failed to locate the fragment of the needle. At the doctor's suggestion, the child was taken to the power-house of an electric company and placed on the dynamo in such a manner that the right knee-joint pressed against a powerful magnet. When it was withdrawn the troublesome bit of steel clung to it, and the experiment was a perfect success. The surgeons could not explain the power of the magnet to draw the steel out of the limb, but they knew that it would do it, and therefore they used it. So I could not give a scientific explanation of the power of faith to eliminate sin from the heart, to lift the sinner out of the mire and clay, and fill his mouth with songs and his soul with angelic communion; but I know that it has that power, and that every one who yields himself to Christ in childlike confidence and self-surrender becomes a part of the flock of the Shepherd King, and is able to sing:

"The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack, if I am his,
And he is mine forever.

"Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And, where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.

"Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulders gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

"In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
And thou before to guide me.

"And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy home forever."

A FRIEND OF JESUS WARMING HIMSELF AT THE ENEMY'S FIRE.

"Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" — *John* xviii. 26.

This question of the servant in the house of the high priest brings out very clearly the strange character of Peter's sin. The servant himself seems to have been astonished that any one who had shared Christ's vigil in the Garden of Gethsemane could now be denying him. Peter had had such precious opportunities of fellowship with Jesus, and had gone with him through so many experiences, both of joy and sorrow, of defeat and victory, that it seemed strange he should have so collapsed in this peculiar hour of the Saviour's loneliness and trial.

It is well for us to permit this to suggest the sacred fellowship which every one of us has enjoyed who has been accepted in the

circle of friendship of Jesus Christ. We, too, have been in the garden with him. We have known the beauty and graciousness of the garden of his heart. We have known the truth of his words which John records: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Many of us have been with him, also, in the garden of suffering, and have rejoiced in the fidelity of a Friend who seemed all the more real to us because of our trial. There are many friends for sunshiny days, but Christ never deserts us in time of storm.

An old lady who for many years has been a most devoted friend in trouble to her neighbors, and to many poor people, found her eyesight failing, and while on a visit to a niece in Boston went to an oculist to obtain a pair of spectacles.

"My dear madam," said the young oculist, after a careful examination, "there is no danger to be apprehended if you take proper precautions, although your eyes at present are not in as good condition as I could wish. The glasses will be of great assistance, of course. Besides that, however, I should advise entire relaxation of the nerves for some

time to come. You should be free from annoyance and excitement, and even from care, for the next six months. And, above all, my dear madam," he added impressively, "you should avoid all trouble and worry. Do not associate with sickness and distress. The effect of such things is to increase the difficulty which you experience."

"Why, child," said the old lady, "you mistook my meanin'. I came to get fitted to a pair of specs so I could better help people that are in trouble and distress. I wasn't calculatin' to wear 'em to heaven, but right here in this world of sin and trouble. I'm afraid maybe you'll have to fit me all over again!"

Jesus Christ is a friend who sticks to us in this world of sin and trouble and will never desert us to our foes. No wonder that the high priest's servant was astonished that Peter should desert such a leader, and no wonder that the world now expects that those who assume fellowship with Christ will be faithful to him and his cause.

Sad effects always come from unfaithfulness on the part of the friends of Jesus. If we fail, we discourage the other friends of Christ. Every man who is faithful under trial

encourages his brethren, as in line of battle one brave man steadies trembling soldiers on either hand, and one self-possessed leader may be able to stop a panic. On the other hand, the cowardice of one may stampede a whole army. When the spies came back to the camp of Israel after their scouting trip into the promised land, they all agreed that it was a rich country and a beautiful place to live, and they brought back the most wonderful clusters of grapes and the sweetest honey; but some cowards among them told of the giants who were so large that the spies felt like grasshoppers in their presence, and their cowardly example communicated itself to the whole army, so that, in spite of the courageous attitude of Caleb and Joshua, they turned away from the very door of the promised land to forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

Such conduct on the part of a friend of Christ has sad effects upon those who do not know him. How impossible it would ever have been for Peter afterwards to have made converts to Christ in the house of that high priest! They would have remembered him as the man who denied his Lord in the hour of danger. Contrast Peter's conduct, and its natural effect, and the action of Paul when he

was a prisoner for Christ's sake in Rome. He was so faithful to his Lord that the house of Nero was honeycombed with Christianity until Paul could speak in his letters of "the saints of Cæsar's household." An inconsistent Christian can never know what sad results may come from a single hour's failure to do his duty. On the other hand, our fidelity to Christ in times of peculiar trial may do more in an hour to make those who witness it believe in our Lord than years of ordinary service.

A very curious and beautiful letter was once written to President Lincoln, that would certainly have given him keen pleasure if he had read it, but he never did. In 1863, some pirates from Peru captured and carried off some natives from the Marquesas Islands in the South Seas. One of them was the son of a powerful chief, and the father made a vow that he would, for revenge, eat the first white man who fell into his hands. A man named Whalan, the first mate of a New Bedford whaling-ship, was before many months captured by the Marquesans; he it was who must furnish a feast for the cannibal chief. All the people of these islands, however, were not cannibals. Among them was a native missionary from Hawaii, named Kakela. Kakela had just

received a present of a boat from a church in Boston, a valuable six-oared boat that he needed much in his missionary work. He set about trying to save Mr. Whalan's life; but the chief would give him up only on one condition — that he should have the new boat in exchange for the captive. Kakela bought him at that price and helped him to leave the islands. The story came to President Lincoln's knowledge, and in the midst of the terrible cares that the life-and-death struggle of the nation threw on him, he characteristically found time to send a message and a new boat to the poor South Sea missionary. Kakela wrote a letter of thanks in return, which closed with these sentences: "As to this friendly deed of mine, its seed was brought from your great land by certain of your countrymen who had received the love of God. It was planted in Hawaii, and I brought it here that these dark regions might receive the root of all that is good and true, which is love. How shall I repay your great kindness to me? Thus David asked of Jonathan, and thus I ask of you, the President of the United States. This is my only payment, that which I received from the Lord — love. May the love of Jesus Christ abound toward you till the end of this terrible

war in your land." Before the letter reached the White House, President Lincoln had died at the hands of the assassin.

So there is only one way that we can repay our Saviour for his sacrifice in our behalf, and that is by giving to him our love and fidelity. Anything less than loving faithfulness in life and in death is unworthy of us and unworthy of him.

We cannot show this love for Christ in any way where it will count for so much as in being careful to always throw our influence on the side of Jesus so as to lead others to love and trust him. The true Christian can never inquire, with Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The whole teaching of Christianity is that we are our brother's keepers in so far as it is possible for us to influence him. We do not live to ourselves. The Christian man or woman who feels that he might be able to moderately drink wine or beer, dare not lose out of the question the weight of his example on others to whom a single glass of strong drink is like a match applied to a magazine of gunpowder. There are many other places where the same law applies. In the question of amusements and recreations the Christian man or woman, in the very

nature of the case, must ask not only if what they are tempted to do is wrong in itself, but whether their influence and example will be used to make a weak brother or sister stumble and fall into sin. There are many things that are on the border-line, as it were, many questions of conduct that have to do with disputed territory between what is Christian and unchristian. In every such case the wise Christian will run no risk of warming himself at the enemy's fire. It is better for us to walk on the open highway of holiness, where all may see that our feet are clean and our hands washed from every questionable enterprise. Whoever follows us there will walk safely. "No lion shall be there, and no ravenous beast shall go up thereon."

No temporary pleasure which may come to a Christian by indulging in doubtful pleasures, and no worldly success which he may gain by indulging in questionable business enterprises, can repay him for the sad loss of an unshadowed conscience before God and a testimony for Christ before his neighbors that is clear and unmistakable. Poor Peter found no joy in wandering from his Lord, and shivered over the enemy's fire as the cowardly lie stuck in his throat.

A wealthy man of Ithaca, New York, disappeared from his home awhile ago, and after many weeks of search he was found in an almshouse in Connecticut. He had wandered away from home, suffering from mental trouble, and for weeks, while his friends were scouring the country on his behalf, this man, who was the owner of a beautiful home, where luxury and comfort waited his every wish, was living amid the hard surroundings and subsisting on the unpalatable food of an almshouse. The Christian who has known the joys of communion with Christ, and has shared the feast in the kingdom of heaven, and then wanders back to the world's almshouse to seek for comfort or pleasure, is as lacking in wisdom as was this unfortunate man.

But how great was the tenderness of Christ to Peter in that sad and disgraceful hour! As Professor Henry Drummond very impressively points out, it was not Peter who turned and looked on the Lord when the cock crew for the second time after his denial, but it was the Lord who turned and looked upon Peter. When the cock crew, that might have recalled him to himself, for he was in the very act of sin: but he did not turn; he was like a

horse that has taken the bits between his teeth, and is running to his ruin. But the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Surely Drummond is right when he reasons that there is nothing more sensitive in all the world than a human soul which has once been quickened into its delicate life by the touch of the divine. Men seldom estimate aright the exquisite beauty and tenderness of a sinner's heart. We apply coarse words to move it, and coarse, harsh stimulants to beat it into life. And if no answer comes, we make the bludgeon heavier and the language harder still, as if the soul were not too fine to respond to weapons so blunt as these. It is a great blunder, such as David perceived when he declared that it was "the gentleness of God" that had made him great. The soul is as fine as a breath, and still preserves through misery and cruelty and sin the marvelous delicacy which tells how near it lies to the Spirit of God who gave it birth. Peter was naturally, perhaps, the coarsest of all the disciples. Our picture of him is a strong, sun-browned fisherman, robust and fearless in disposition, hot-tempered and rash, a man who would bluster and swear — as Peter often did until Christ took hold of him, and, through infinite ten-

derness and gentleness, mastered his spirit and made him a saint. Oh, the tenderness of Jesus Christ that looked, no doubt, through tear-filled eyes, on Peter, as he shivered over the enemy's fire!

He is the same tender, loving Christ now, and if some of you have been painting your own portrait into Peter's story of sin and failure, I pray God you will continue and follow Peter in his penitence. "There is a greater fact in Peter's life than Peter's sin — a much less known fact: Peter's penitence. All the world are at one with Peter in his sin; but not all the world are with him in his penitence. Sinful Peter is one man, and repentant Peter is another; and many who have kept his company along these well-worn steps to sin have left him to trace the tear-washed path of penitence alone. But the real lesson in Peter's life is the lesson in repentance. His fall is a lesson in sin which requires no teacher, but his repentance is a great lesson in salvation. And Peter's penitence is full of the deepest spiritual meaning to all who have ever made Peter's discovery — that they have sinned." I am very sure this message must come from God to some of you. You are conscious of

the bitter loss which has come to your own heart and life because of a lack of supreme fidelity to Jesus. Like Peter, you have followed Christ at a great distance. Instead of seeking your highest joy in the service of the Lord, you have made that service a secondary matter, and have sought for real warmth and comfort, not in the Bible, not in the church, nor in self-sacrificing fellowship with Jesus Christ, but at the fire of the enemy, among people and associations whose spirit is worldly and, if not hostile to Christ, at least indifferent toward him. Do not, I beg you, go on in such a course. Call a halt here and now to a career which can only end in despair. Better to follow Peter out to tears of repentance, that shall issue in joy and lead you on to a Pentecost of victory and a crown of glory, than continue your cold and cheerless association in the camp of the enemy. Christ will forgive you, as he did Peter, if now, when you see his loving, reproving eyes upon you, and feel the sting of penitence, you turn to him in loving appeal. Peter went away from the enemies of Jesus after his repentance, and went back again to the old loving fellowship with the friends of Christ. It is there that he is

found after the resurrection. So, if you have grown cold and wandered to the enemy's fire, the surest way back into fellowship with the Lord is a repentance that will bring you again into close and tender relation to the disciples of Jesus.

CHRIST FAINTING UNDER THE CROSS.

"He bearing his cross went forth."—*John* xix. 17.

"They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross."—*Matt.* xxvii. 32.

We know from this diversity of statement that although Christ started out from Pilate's judgment-hall bearing his own cross, he had not gone far before Simon, a man from Africa, probably a black man, was forced into service by the soldiers and compelled to carry the cross for him. We are sure that they did not do it through any kindness to Jesus; but the pain and suffering and long abstinence from food which he had undergone left him weak, and they doubtless feared that he would not live to be crucified, and so, rather than have the horrid sport spoiled, they pressed Simon into carrying the heavy load to Golgotha, where the crucifixion was to take place. This weakness on the part of Christ must have come very soon after leaving the hall, for John is the only

one of the four biographers of Jesus who recalls the fact that on leaving the hall he was bearing his own cross, while Matthew, Mark, and Luke all make special mention of Simon's being compelled to carry that sacred burden.

In the great cathedral at Antwerp there is a series of splendid pictures which represent Christ on his way from the hall of judgment to Calvary. In the first one of these pictures the Saviour stands calm and erect. His great physical exhaustion has not yet made itself dominant, and, buoyed up by his exalted spirit, the body has not yet given way. In the second picture, however, there is every indication of speedy collapse, and his body is bending under the weight of the cross, until, as you look, your heart beats quick with a desire to get your own shoulder under the load and relieve him by your fresh strength. In the third picture he has fallen to the ground beneath the great burden, and it is at this point that Simon, happening along, is ordered by the soldiers to take the cross from off its prostrate victim.

We do not know about Simon, whether he was a good man or a bad, but we know that this cross must have been very unexpected to him that day. Whether he had

been in the company, looking on during the trial of Jesus, or whether he had overtaken the procession in the street, in either case we are sure that he had not expected to carry this cross for Christ. He did not volunteer to do it, but did it under compulsion. I have no doubt that that other Simon, whose surname was Peter, in the long years of his after ministry, never ceased to regret that he had not kept close to Christ and volunteered to carry the cross of Jesus on that black Friday which we have learned to call Good. What a romantic and heroic experience that would have been for Simon Peter! But it came very unexpectedly to this Simon of Cyrene. Is it not true that the crosses are always coming to us unexpectedly? Who of us does not bear crosses because we must?

A minister was driving through a mountainous region one bleak November day. It was cloudy, and the air was raw and chill with a threat of snow. A turn in the road brought him near an old weather-beaten house. In his astonishment he stopped his horse suddenly. A little woodpile was heaped in front of a tumble-down shed, and an old woman, thinly clad, with only the protection of a handkerchief tied over her head, was chopping wood with

great vigor. The chips were flying fast, and so intent was she upon her work that she had not heard the sound of the wheels, and did not hear his salutation until it was repeated.

"Why are you doing such cold, hard work? It is too much for a woman's strength," said the minister, looking with pity at her slender, bowed figure, and gray hair.

"Yes, I s'pose it is," was the answer; "but I have to."

Further tact brought out the fact of much severer service. She lived alone with her infirm, bedridden husband, and not only cared for him, but managed somehow to do the whole work of their small place.

"And he's been sick going on seven years — ever since he had a shock of the numb palsy," she stated, in a matter-of-fact way; adding, as an item of no special consequence, "and I ain't what you call rugged, myself."

"But how can you do it all?" said the wondering minister, with thoughts of his own carefully sheltered womankind in his heart. "It is surely too hard and discouraging for you."

Like an embodiment of endurance, she stood, ax in hand, evidently in haste to go on with her work. Something flashed from her faded eyes as they dwelt for a moment upon

the warmly clad gentleman in his comfortable carriage. But all she said was, "I have to," and then she turned to her chopping and the chips flew again.

That woman was a Christian philosopher. We are likely to be deluded into thinking, sometimes, that to be compelled to do a thing under the pressure of the inevitable is something hard and dreadful. But have we any right to feel that way? Is it not rather an indication that it is God's will? And if that is so, it is the best thing that can happen to us. David prays: "Teach me thy way, O Lord; lead me in a plain path." What is that but praying that the way shall be shut up to just the one path so that he can't make a mistake? Of course, our crosses sometimes come to us through our own folly and sin; but if we are sincerely trying to do right, and unexpected crosses lie in the way, and we are compelled to take them up whether we will or no, we ought to take them up readily and make the best of them, for in every such cross we shall be sure of the sympathy and fellowship of our Divine Master.

We ought to learn also from this study that sudden weakness and threat of failure does not mean that all is hopeless for future success. Christ, who seemed so near fainting

and failure under his cross, went on through his great sacrifice with matchless courage and self-composure; and so may we rise out of our weakness through the same divine strength which was given to him. The devil is always trying to make us believe that some temporary collapse that may have come from ill health, or a hundred other local causes, is the end of hope, and we might as well give up. A few croaking doubts and fears can make a fearful amount of noise.

I have heard of a man who came to a hotel-keeper and asked him if he would buy two car-loads of frogs'-legs.

"Two car-loads!" exclaimed the astonished landlord. "Why, I couldn't use them in twenty years."

"Well, will you buy half a car-load?"

"No."

"Twenty or thirty bushels?"

"No."

"Twenty or thirty dozen?"

"No."

"Two dozen?"

"Yes."

"A few days later the man returned with three pairs of legs.

"Is that all?" said the landlord.

"Yes; the fact is that I live near a pond, and the frogs made so much noise that I thought there were millions of them; but I dragged the pond with a seine, drained it, and raked it, and there were only three frogs in the whole thing."

The devil is able to handle his frogs of doubts and suspicions and fears in the same way. You need not think you are the only person that after faithfully doing good for a long time has been suddenly beset by the enemy and scared into believing that there was nothing left to do but to faint and die. Moses thought it was all up with him, and fled away from Egypt into the desert, and herded sheep for forty years — he that had been educated for a king. Elijah, after his splendid triumph on Mount Carmel, ran like any other coward before wicked Jezebel, and hid his head in the sand under a juniper-tree, and begged to be allowed to die. Poor Jonah! Even being swallowed by a whale was not enough for him; he must have also the lesson of the withered gourd. But God was tender in all these cases, and infinitely compassionate. Don't be discouraged. Christ's greatest triumph came after he fainted under his cross. Easter dawn was only three days

away. God has a to-morrow for you, if you will pour out your heart at his mercy seat.

"Beyond the heartache and the falling tear,
Beyond the days with sorrow's presence drear,
Beyond the shadows filled with nameless fear,
Waits God's to-morrow.

"So courage, heart! press upward day by day,
And o'er thy path let hope shed this bright ray,
That in God's own good time, some sweet, glad day,
Shall dawn his morrow."

Out of fainting hours of poverty and cross-bearing comes wealth too rich for the weighing of earth's scales. Raphael, the great Italian painter, whose marvelous pictures are worth fabulous sums of money, was a very poor man when young, and had some hard experiences. Once, when traveling, he put up at an inn, and remained there, unable to get away through lack of funds to settle his bill. The landlord grew suspicious that such was the case, and his request for a settlement grew more and more pressing. Finally young Raphael, in desperation, resorted to an ingenious device. He carefully painted upon a table-top in his room a number of gold coins; and, placing the table in a certain light that gave a startling effect, he packed his few belong-

ings, and summoned his host. "There," he exclaimed, with a lordly wave of his hand toward the table, "is enough to settle my bill and more. Now kindly show the way to the door." The innkeeper, with many smiles and bows, ushered his guest out, and then hastened back to gather up his gold. When he discovered the fraud his rage and consternation knew no bounds, until a wealthy English traveler, attracted by his anger, discovered the value of the art put in the work, and gladly paid the landlord many times the price of the artist's bill for the table. So out of burdened, cross-bearing lives to-day come the works of spiritual insight and genius which wealth and ease would never develop. Christ never could have been what he has been to our world if he had been born in a rich banker's house in Jerusalem and had lived a life of wealth and self-indulgence. It is the Christ born in a manger, reared in a carpenter's cottage, who went about on foot, who was lonely, and tearful, and fainting — that is the Christ who has captured the heart of the world and enriched it forever! Do not imagine that all the wealth is gone out of that gold-mine yet. Days of sorrow, times of weakness, dark hours when we faint under

the cross, have their value, and if we keep our hearts steadfast in fellowship with Christ, all life's trying experiences shall work together for our good.

"I cannot say,
Beneath the presence of life's cares to-day,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I would rather walk the rugged way
If him it please.

"I cannot feel
That all is well when darkening clouds conceal
The shining sun;
But then I know
God lives and loves — can say, since it is so,
'Thy will be done.'

"I do not see
Why God should e'er permit some things to be,
When he is love;
But I can see,
Though often dimmed through mystery,
His hand above.

"I may not try
To keep the hot tears back, but hush the sigh,
'It might have been,'
And try to still
All rising murmurs, and to God's sweet will
Respond, 'Amen!'"

CHRIST TRIUMPHING ON THE CROSS.

"Truly this man was the Son of God."—*Mark* xv. 39.

THIS is the testimony of the officer who had charge of the crucifixion of Christ. This man was a Roman soldier, to whom the execution of Jesus was simply a matter of official duty. We do not know what his personal feelings toward Christ had been before, but it is quite probable that he knew or thought very little concerning him. He doubtless received the command to put Christ to death by crucifixion with very much the same thought and feelings that he would have had if the prisoner had been any one else, or one of the two thieves who were delivered over to him for punishment at the same time. But this man had a most excellent opportunity to study the conduct of Jesus under supreme trial, and the result of that study and observation was that this hard-headed, veteran Roman soldier was

convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. This was a great triumph for Jesus.

The triumph of Jesus on the cross was a triumph of love and forgiveness over anger and revenge. He was being treated with the greatest severity, and the mob were crying out at him with contempt; but he met their anger with compassion, their contempt with pity, their railing with prayer, and their vengeance with tenderness. Was there ever such tenderness as that illustrated in the triumph of Christ on his cross?

Dr. Meyer recalls the story of a poor distracted man who used to travel up and down one of the provinces of France, going from house to house, wandering from village to village, accosting the men, women, and children whom he met, always with the same question: "I am looking for tenderness. Can you tell me where to find it?" The simple country folk made light of his innocent questions, and would say: "Have you not found it yet?" "No," would be the sad reply; "and yet, I have searched for it everywhere." "Perhaps you will find it in the garden." Off he would hurry. The gardener would refer him to the stable, and the stable to the next house, and the next house to the next village;

and so, mournfully, to the end of life, the poor weak-minded man, half conscious of his hopeless search, half realizing the ridicule with which he was everywhere received, died without finding it.

This simple story, so full of pathos, is suggestive of what multitudes of people are ever illustrating. Their lives are a search for this marvelous grace of human tenderness, and often a search in vain. But no man ever searched in vain for tenderness at the feet of Jesus Christ. How wonderfully his tenderness triumphs in his prayer on the cross for his enemies! Call up the scene before you — the three crosses standing in a row, with all eyes fastened on the central cross, to which is nailed the Christ. The crowd vent all their spite and cruel feeling on him. They rail at him. They say: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." And at first, both the thieves, in spite of their agony, join in the abuse of Jesus; and they, too, shout at him: "If thou art the Christ, save thyself and us." Then the lips of Christ move, and the noise of the crowd is hushed to listen. They doubtless thought he would rail back in return; but from those patient lips came the strange reply, not addressed to them, but to God:

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That prayer won a great triumph at once in the case of one of the men who was being crucified. He had never seen a man like this. Poor fellow! he had consorted with bad men, and he knew what anger was, and vengeance, and he could harden his heart against any sort of rebuke or threat of punishment; but before this Divine Being who was reviled, and yet reviled not again, and who prayed for his murderers with such infinite tenderness, the hardness of his heart broke down. He could have resisted any kind of threat of future punishment from Jesus, and retorted to it with bitterness, but to have Christ pray for him with such love in speech and tone melted down all his hate, and he cried out: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Ah, what a triumph was that! It was a triumph not only over the man's hardness of heart — it was a triumph over his sinful nature; and Christ's forgiving tenderness cleansed that wicked heart as Jesus answered: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." The sinful heart of this man, which had been the cause of all his wicked conduct, was suddenly changed and transformed.

Men are not sinners only because they break God's law, but they violate the law of God because they are sinners in their hearts and characters. Dr. W. A. Robinson gives a very simple but clear illustration of this important truth. He was surprised, one day, to find that his watch was running too fast. It had been good, and keeping correct time; but here it was "transgressing the law." He knew that the fault was not with the hands. It had not suddenly become unreliable because the hands were sinners, but the watch itself had in some way become deranged, and caused the erratic movement of the hands. To set them back would do no permanent good; the trouble was inside. He took his watch to a competent jeweler for inspection. He subjected it to some sort of a test, and in a moment said: "The trouble is, it has been magnetized; it is charged with too much electricity."

"Why, I don't know how that could have been," the minister protested.

"Oh, it was probably the result of an electric-car ride, and stole in unawares; but that is neither here nor there, how it got in; the problem now is to get it out."

"But can't you regulate it — slow the hair-spring a bit?" the doctor suggested.

"No; you would have it forever running too fast or too slow; the only thing to do is to demagnetize it," was the jeweler's reply.

Now that is the way with a sinful soul; a man does wrong because he is himself wrong at the heart. The whole moral nature has been magnetized by evil. A subtle influence of wickedness and worldliness has in some way taken possession of the affections and powers of the soul, and given the whole nature a wrong bias, and nothing will ever make it right, or make it possible for the man to do right, until that is expelled. There is the deadly secret of sin. The uncontrollable temper, the pride, the desolating explosion of passion and lust and appetite, the jealousy and envy that ever and anon spring from ambush — all these are only manifestations of the real wrong which is in the heart, which is sinful and must be cleansed by divine power. David had the right thought when he cried out: "Create within me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." And Jesus, who wrought that wondrous triumph in the salvation of the poor dying thief on the cross, is able to work the same glorious transformation in any one.

Christ's triumph on the cross was the

triumph of the mind and heart, the triumph of the spirit, over pain and suffering and death. None of the things men fear when permitted to do their worst had the power to dim the victory of Christ's supreme ideal which he had marked out for himself as the Saviour of the world. The devil is always tempting us, when in times of trial and sorrow we are nailed to our cross, to believe that the noble ideals with which we were once inspired in happier days were too good to be true, and are not practicable in this every-day world, and especially for hard times and days of disappointment. But Jesus deserted none of his ideals on the cross. Some one has written a very striking book entitled "The House of Dreams." The story begins with a conversation between the author, who is the dreamer, and a sad-minded, hopeless friend, who interprets the multiplied sorrows and miseries of the world as proofs of the non-existence of an immanent, benevolent God. The dreamer and his pessimistic companion make tours of discovery through the streets of a large city, taking account as they go of the many people who are in poverty and trouble of body and mind. As they look upon these evidences of misery the hopeless man becomes more hope-

less and outspoken in his bitter skepticism; but all these sights fail to cloud the faith of the dreamer in a loving Heavenly Father who knows and cares for his children. One night the dreamer sees a great vision. Led by an angel, he enters the other world through the gate of sorrow. His experiences are described with remarkable power and interesting detail. There was one hall into which he was led where were placed the tablets of judgment. Each new-comer from the earth had to stand before two of these solemn tablets. One was of silver, the other was of gold. On the first the whole life of the gazer was reproduced; on the latter all the good deeds he or she had done passed as in a living panorama again. Among those who stood in front of the tablets of judgment was a poor woman whom the dreamer remembered to have seen during the investigations which he had made in company with his hopeless friend. He had noticed her particularly because of the sad plight in which she seemed to be. She was shivering in the cold street, but keeping a child alive by the warmth of her thin breast. Now this poor woman stood before the tablets of judgment, and scene after scene in her past life rose before her. In one she was a girl who

stooped above her mother to comfort her. When the mother took greedily, without thanks, the food she gave her, the girl said nothing, but smiled to see her mother eat. Other scenes followed in rapid succession. The girl grew into a heroine, all the more splendid because so utterly unconscious of her heroism. With hands that were hardened and made coarse by toil, she supported her mother until she died, and afterwards she toiled in the same way to support her invalid husband until he died; and when these were gone she toiled for her children. Love was the only light in her darkened life, and she had clung to it with passionate devotion. Out of the greatness of her love and self-sacrifice came her transfiguration. As the pictures increased upon the golden mirror, the dreamer marveled to behold the figure of the human creature in foul rags grow fainter, and the spiritual figure, with face like the dawn of a summer morning, grow clearer. And at the last the rags and the poverty and the misery all disappeared, and only the spiritual, the beautiful, and the glorified was left; for this was a woman in whom the ideal had survived amid all the degradations of the real; so that the shining figure in the golden mirror was but the reflec-

tion of the woman who herself stood watching it.

So it may be with every one of us if through the trials and sorrows and crosses of life we are faithful in our devotion to the high calling to which we have been called through Christ Jesus our Lord. The trials of life are only temporary, but the spiritual graces which they produce in character are eternal. Calvary, with its bloody cross, its hooting mob, its blackened sky, its quaking earth and open sepulcher, was only a gloomy background for Easter morning, with its vision of angels and its glorified and triumphant Christ. We, too, may be triumphant on our crosses if we keep close to God, as Jesus did.

It was the triumphant spirit of Christ, conquering hate and revenge, exhibiting patience, tenderness, love, and confidence in God, that conquered the centurion and conquered the dying thief. If on your day of crucifixion you exhibit the same spirit of forgiveness and tenderness toward man, and loving confidence toward God, those who are beholders of your cross will also be persuaded of the divinity of your Divine Lord.

HUMAN LIFE AS AN EVERGREEN.

"Because I live, ye shall live also."—*John* xiv. 19.

THE Christian life is an evergreen. Some trees go barren through the winter; others, although they catch new impulse from time to time, and seem to rejoice in sympathy with the other trees in the forest in their new dress every springtime, never in any winter storm lose the green credentials of life. Human life was meant to be like that, ever fresh and abundant in the revelation of spiritual graces which come from sonship to God.

The words of our text were spoken with the shadow of his death upon the cross already falling across the Saviour's path. He had come up close to death and taken its measure, and was speaking of his own immortality, over which death could have no power, and the fellowship of life which he was in the future to have with his disciples. We may be sure

that Christ meant something more than mere continued existence. Man's immortality is guaranteed to him in his creation. But the life which we have because of the life of Jesus is a life of spiritual elevation which comes to us in fellowship with him, and is a life over which the body can have little control. As Paul says, the earthly house of our tabernacle may be dissolved, but this glorious life of faith and hope and love which we have in friendship with Jesus shall be clothed upon with a house which is from heaven.

The inner life is of infinitely more importance than the outer life. Many now, as in the days of Jesus' life on earth, are careful to keep the outward life respectable and presentable, while the inner life of the soul is full of hate, and anger, and envy, and greed — a veritable parallel to those whom Christ declared were whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. A gentleman was one day walking down the street, when he passed a store where a man was washing the large plate-glass show-window. There was one soiled spot which defied all efforts to remove it. After rubbing hard at it, using much soap and water, and failing to affect it, he found out the trouble. "It 's on

the inside," he called out to some one in the store. There are a great many people who are striving to cleanse the soul from its stains. They wash it with the tears of sorrow; they scrub it with the soap of good resolves; they polish it with a chamois-skin of morality, but still the consciousness of guilt is not removed. The difficulty lies in the fact that the trouble is on the inside. It is the heart which is corrupt. So long as the fountain is bitter, it is useless to seek for a draught of sweet water from the stream that flows from it. The glory of Christianity lies in the fact that Jesus Christ has power to cleanse the fountain of the heart and make the stream of life sweet at its source. Men only begin to live in this divine sense when they are aroused to high things by the Saviour's smile of forgiveness and good cheer.

Christ has power to waken the dormant capabilities and sleeping faculties of nobler life into being. A mother left her babe for a few moments in the care of a little brother. In her absence the boy sketched the picture of the child. When the mother returned and saw the picture, she gave the boy artist a kiss of approval. "That kiss," said Benjamin West, many years afterwards, "made me a painter." The kiss of Jesus Christ and the good cheer

of his presence arouse holy ambitions until men and women under the magic of his touch feel that nothing that is good enough to do is too hard for them. Illustrations are everywhere of the men and women who began to live only when they became acquainted with Jesus.

Bishop Whipple, the great apostle to the Northwestern Indians, relates an incident which illustrates the vital power of Christ's gospel whenever it enters the human heart, even though it be under unfavorable circumstances. Some thirty-seven years ago the bishop knew a great orator of the lower Sioux, Red Owl. He never attended church, for he was afraid he would lose his influence among his people. One day he came into the schoolroom, and stopped before a picture, "Ecce Homo," and asked: "What is that? Why are his hands bound? Why are those thorns on his head?" With patient gentleness the school-teacher told again the old, old story of him who was rich and yet for our sakes became poor, and who wore the crown of thorns through his deathless love for us. Red Owl was so touched by the story of the love of "the Son of the Great Spirit" that he came again and again to ask about Jesus. One day the bishop was going to Wabasha's village,

and saw on the prairie a new-made grave; over it was a plain wood cross. He learned that Red Owl was dead. He had been taken ill suddenly, and when dying he said to his young men: "That story which the white man has brought into our country is true; I have it in my heart. When I am dead I wish you to put a cross over my grave, that the Indians may see what is in Red Owl's heart."

Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, whether he is Jew or Greek, Indian or negro, black or white, the wide earth around. He has power to resurrect within us the spiritual life-plant which has been covered over by sin and choked out by worldliness. In a heart so earthly and sensual that to human eyes there is no evidence of divine sonship, Christ is able to cause to spring into verdure and life a new sprout shooting out from the buried root of childhood.

When Bishop Asbury was making a great preaching tour on horseback through the forests of South Carolina, in 1788, he came one day upon a negro who was sitting on a creek bank, fishing.

"What is your name, my friend?" asked the bishop.

"Punch, sah."

"Do you ever pray, Punch?"

"No, sah."

That was enough for the bishop. This was just the kind of man he was seeking. He got down from his horse, and had a long talk with this ignorant black sheep in the wilderness. For over an hour he talked with him, telling him in the simplest way he could the story of God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Then he got Punch down on his knees and prayed with him, bade him a brotherly good-bye, mounted his horse, and rode away.

Twenty years passed away, and Bishop Asbury, one of the most tireless evangelists that ever lived, was again on a long preaching tour through the South. One day a travel-stained negro came to the house where he was stopping, and begged to see him. It was Punch. He had walked seventy miles to get a glimpse of the man who had brought the dawn of life into the darkness of his "valley and shadow of death." The bishop learned then, for the first time, that he had no sooner passed out of sight, after that memorable interview twenty years before on the creek bank, than Punch shouldered his fishing-rod and made for the "quarters," his whole soul aflame with the wonderful truths he had

heard. In that day he was a new man. He had been sleeping all the years before. He knew how to hoe and hunt and fish, but that he was a man who could love and hope and pray and live forever had not penetrated into the depths of his soul. The bishop's story of Christ had been like a lightning-flash that had illuminated at once his intellectual and spiritual darkness. He went back to the plantation with his whole heart on fire, and soon developed talents which nobody had dreamed of his possessing, least of all himself, which made him an irresistible force for good in the community. It was not long before this strange new life which had transformed Punch began to tell on the lives of his fellow-slaves. They ceased to steal their master's rice, and drunken carousals on Sunday soon passed away. At first the overseer tried to stop Punch from preaching, but he might as well have blown with a hand-bellows against the whirlwind. Punch's conduct under persecution was so full of the spirit of Christ that the next order he received from the overseer was to come and pray for him. In a few months Punch was at the head of a large plantation church to which he ministered in spiritual things.

Twenty-eight years after Bishop Asbury's second visit, a Methodist missionary among the slaves, passing through that section of the country, heard of this church in the wilderness, and went to find it. Meeting a negro on the road, he inquired if there was a preacher on the plantation.

"Oh, yes, massa," said the man; "de bishup lib hyar."

Following the slave's directions, he came after a little to the "bishup's" cabin, and knocked. The door opened, and Punch, now a hoary-headed patriarch, stood before him, leaning upon his staff. The old man regarded his visitor a moment in silence, and then, perceiving that he was a minister, lifted his eyes to heaven, and devoutly exclaimed: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

"I have many children in this place," he explained, "and I've been praying the Lord to send somebody to look after them when I am gone; and now he has sent you, my child, and I am ready to go."

Standing by his bed a day or two afterwards, the missionary heard him murmur: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in

peace; let — let — le —" and immediately his prayer was answered.

The Christ who had power to transform the Sioux Indian, Red Owl, and the South Carolina negro, Punch, from ignorant heathen into men of God whose hearts were filled with spiritual graces and whose lives were fragrant with goodness, has not lost his power to waken such life into being in human hearts in our own time. We must never for a moment lose sight of this power or lose the emphasis of it in our Christian work. It is not a mere matter of education or morality which we have to preach to the world: it is the gospel of life — a gospel which has power to resurrect a man from the dead; a gospel which can purify a wicked heart; a gospel which can set free a captive handcuffed by sinful habits, which can throw open prison doors and lift men out of the mire and the clay of the Slough of Despond. We must keep the emphasis there. The whole air of Christendom gets full of doubt and hopeless with spiritual malaria when the emphasis is taken off of that, no matter where else it is put. We want life! — life in the pulpit, and life in the pew; life in the prayer-meeting; life at the family altar; life in the aggressive work of

the church, which seeks sinners to transform them, and seeks the fortresses of the devil to destroy them.

This spiritual life which we have in fellowship with Jesus Christ defies the power of age. Passing years leave their mark upon the body. The almond-tree flourishes on the head; the grinders cease from very lonesomeness; the windows become vague and uncertain in their vision; and after a while the pitcher of earthly life itself is broken at the fountain: but all this has no power to wither the green leaf of that spiritual life which is fed from the heart of God to those who are in fellowship with Jesus.

Not only does the Christian keep the green leaves of spiritual life into old age and across the river of death, but the memory of his fidelity and the fragrance of his conduct remain ever green and beautiful after he has passed away from the earth. Thaddeus Stevens, a great political leader in his time, was visited in his last illness by a clergyman, who said to him: "It is no idle curiosity that has induced me to call on you, but a desire to know your sentiments on the subject of religion. Should you die in this attack, what shall we say about your faith in the Bible?"

Raising himself in bed, adjusting his gown and cap, he said: "The Bible, the Bible — take that away and there is nothing left."

Pressed with the question as to a personal interest and experience, he said: "I do not profess to have religion in that way, but my old Baptist mother had it, and I believe in my mother." The one thread that held the dying statesman to a possibility of faith and forgiveness through Christ was in his mother's experience and his faith in her.

John Randolph, an earlier statesman in American history, once said: "When I try to make myself an infidel, I fancy I feel the hand of my mother on my head, and her voice sounding in my ear as she taught me to say: 'Our Father which art in heaven.'"

Let us not forget that if our memories are to grow green with immortal comfort and blessing for our children, and for the people that are to come after us, it will be because there has been in us, in our conversation and our deeds, the seeds of this divine life which is victorious over sickness and death and the grave.

If we live this life with Christ on earth, we do not need to worry about the life which is to come. Christ will take care of that. He

says himself that when death comes to his friends he shall never be permitted to come alone. The white horse and his rider may come alone to the man of the world and of sin, but he never comes alone to the Christian. Our Lord has promised his friends that he will come to receive them and welcome them to life in the mansion which he has prepared for them. A balsam fir does not lose its evergreen quality when transferred from some low valley to the hills. So the Christian whose heart is full of spiritual communion, and the branches of whose life are ever green with hope and love, will not lose his quality when transplanted from the valleys of earth to the highlands of heaven. It is not that life we should be careful about, but this life. The interesting question is not how we are going to live there, but how are we living here? If we are risen with Christ now, and have our affections set with him upon things that are above, death will come as a promotion at Commencement-time, and set us free from the school-time conditions of earth for the wide career toward which our Lord has been leading us.

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